



PARADISE
REGAIN'D.

A
POEM.

In IV BOOKS.

To which is added

SAMSON AGONISTES.

The Author

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LONDON,

Printed for John Starkey at the Mitre
in Fleet-street, near Temple-Bar.

MDCLXX



PARADISE REGAIN'D,

A POEM.

The First BOOK.

I Who e're while the happy Garden sung,
By one mans disobedience lost, now sing
Recover'd Paradise to all mankind,
By one mans firm obedience fully tri'd
Through all temptation, and the Tempter foil'd
In all his wiles, defeated and repuls't,
And *Eden* rais'd in the vast Wilderness.

Thou Spirit who ledst this glorious Eremite
Into the Desert, his Victorious Field
Against the Spiritual Foe, and brought'st him thence
By proof the undoubted Son of God, inspire,
As thou art wont, my prompted Song else mute,
And bear through highth or depth of natures bounds

6 *Paradise Regain'd.*

With prosperous wing full summ'd to tell of deeds
Above Heroic, though in secret done,
And unrecorded left through many an Age,
Worthy t' have not remain'd so long untung.

Now had the great Proclaimer with a voice
More awfull than the sound of Trumpet, cri'd
20 Repentance, and Heavens Kingdom nigh at hand
To all Baptiz'd: to his great Baptism flock'd
With aw the Regions round, and with them came
From *Nazareth* the Son of *Joseph* deem'd
To the flood *Jordan*, came as then obscure,
Unmarkt, unknown; but him the Baptist soon
Descri'd, divinely warn'd, and witness bore
As to his worthier, and would have resign'd
To him his Heavenly Office, nor was long
His witness unconfirm'd: on him baptiz'd
30 Heaven open'd, and in likeness of a Dove
The Spirit descended, while the Fathers voice
From Heav'n pronounc'd him his beloved Son.
That heard the Adversary, who roving still
About the world, at that assembly sam'd
Would not be last, and with the voice divine
Nigh Thunder-struck, th' exalted man, to whom
Such high attest was giv'n, a while survey'd
With wonder, then with envy, fraught and rage
Flies to his place, nor rests, but in mid air
40 To Council summons all his mighty Peers,
Within thick Clouds and dark ten-fold involv'd,
A gloomy Consistory; and them amidst
With looks agast and sad he thus bespake.
O ancient Powers of Air and this wide world,
For much more willingly I mention Air,
This our old Conquest, than remember Hell

Paradise Regain'd.

Our hated habitation; well ye know
How many Ages, as the years of men,
This Universe we have possess'd, and rul'd
50 In manner at our will th' affairs of Earth,
Since *Adam* and his facil consort *Eve*
Lost Paradise deceiv'd by me, though since
With dread attending when that fatal wound
Shall be inflicted by the Seed of *Eve*
Upon my head, long the decrees of Heav'n
Delay, for longest time to him is short;
And now too soon for us the circling hours
This dreaded time have compass'd, wherein we
Must bide the stroak of that long threatn'd wound,
60 At least if so we can, and by the head
Broken be not intended all our power
To be infring'd, our freedom and our being.
In this fair Empire won of Earth and Air;
For this ill news I bring, the Womans seed
Destin'd to this, is late of Woman born,
His Birth to our just fear gave no small cause,
But his growth now to youths full flowr, displaying
All vertue grace and wisdom to atchieve
Things highest, greatest, multiplies my fear.
70 Before him a great Prophet, to proclaim
His coming, is sent Harbinger, who all
Invites, and in the Consecrated stream
Pretends to wash off sin, and fit them so
Purified to receive him pure, or rather
To do him honour as their King; all come,
And he himself among them was Baptiz'd,
Not thence to be more pure, but to receive
The Testimony of Heaven, that who he is
Thenceforth the Nations may not doubt; I saw

8 Paradise Regain'd.

80 The Prophet do him reverence, on him rising
 Out of the Water, Heav'n above the Clouds
 Unfold her Crystall Doors, thence on his head
 A perfect Dove descend, what e're it meant,
 And out of Heav'n the Sov'raign voice I hear
 This is my Son belov'd, in him am pleas'd.
 His Mother then is mortal, but his Sire,
 He who obtains the Monarchy of Heav'n,
 And what will he not do to advance his Son?
 His first-begot we know, and sore have felt,
 90 When his fierce thunder drove us to the deep;
 Who this is we must learn, for man he seems
 In all his lineaments, though in his face
 The glimpses of his Fathers glory shine,
 Ye see our danger on the utmost edge
 Of hazard, which admits no long debate,
 But must with something sudden be oppos'd,
 Not force, but well couch'd fraud, well woven snares,
 E're in the head of Nations he appear
 Their King, their Leader, and Supream on Earth.
 100 I, when no other durst, sole undertook
 The dismal expedition to find out
 And ruine *Adam*, and the exploit perform'd
 Successfully; a calmer Voyage now
 Will waite me; and the way found prosp'rous once
 Induces best to hope of like success.
 He ended, and his words impression left
 Of much amazement to th' infernal Crew,
 Distracted and surpriz'd with deep dismay
 At these sad tidings; but no time was then
 110 For long indulgence to their fears or grief:
 Unanimous they all commit the care
 And management of this main enterprize

Paradise Regain'd.

9

To him their great Dictator, whose attempt
 At first against mankind so well had thriv'd
 In *Adam's* overthrow, and led their march
 From Hell's deep-vaulted Den to dwell in light,
 Regents and Potentates, and Kings, yea gods
 Of many a pleasant Realm and Province wide.
 So to the Coast of *Jordan* he directs
 120 His easie steps; girded with snaky wiles,
 Where he might likeliest find this new-declar'd,
 This Man of men, attested Son of God,
 Temptation and all guile on him to try;
 So to subvert whom he suspected rais'd
 To end his Reign on Earth so long enjoy'd:
 But contrary unweeting he fulfill'd
 The purpos'd Counsel pre-ordain'd and fixt
 Of the most High, who in full frequency bright
 Of Angels, thus to *Gabriel* smiling spake.
 130 *Gabriel* this day by proof thou shalt behold,
 Thou and all Angels conversant on Earth
 With man or mens affairs, how I begin
 To verifie that solemn message late,
 On which I sent thee to the Virgin pure
 In *Galilee*, that she should bear a Son
 Great in Renown, and call'd the Son of God;
 Then toldst her doubting how these things could be
 To her a Virgin, that on her should come
 The Holy Ghost, and the power of the highest
 140 O're-shadow her: this man born and now up-grown,
 To shew him worthy of his birth Divine
 And high prediction, henceforth I expose
 To Satan; let him tempt and now assay
 His utmost subtilty because he boasts
 And vaunts of his great cunning to the throng

Of

Of his Apostasie; he might have learnt
 Less overweening, since he fail'd in *Job*,
 Whose constant perseverance overcame
 What e're his cruel malice could invent.

150 He now shall know I can produce a man
 Of female Seed, far abler to resist
 All his sollicitations, and at length
 All his vast force, and drive him back to Hell,
 Winning by Conquest what the first man lost
 By fallacy surpriz'd. But first I mean
 To exercise him in the Wilderness,
 There he shall first lay down the rudiments
 Of his great warfare, e're I send him forth
 To conquer Sin and Death the two grand foes,
 160 By Humiliation and strong Sufferance:
 His weakness shall o'recome Satanic strength
 And all the world, and mass of sinfull flesh;
 That all the Angels and Ætherial Powers,
 They now, and men hereafter may discern,
 From what consummate vertue I have chose
 This perfect Man, by merit call'd my Son,
 To earn Salvation for the Sons of men.

So spake the Eternal Father, and all Heaven
 Admiring stood a space, then into Hymns
 170 Burst forth, and in Celestial measures mov'd,
 Circling the Throne and Singing, while the hand
 Sung with the voice, and this the argument.

Victory and Triumph to the Son of God
 Now entering his great duel, not of arms,
 But to vanquish by wisdom hellish wiles.
 The Father knows the Son; therefore secure
 Ventures his filial Vertue, though untri'd,
 Against what e're may tempt, what e're seduce,

Allure,

Allure, or terrifie, or undermine.

180 Be frustrate all ye stratagems of Hell,
 And devillish machinations come to nought.

So they in Heav'n their Odes and Vigils tun'd:
 Mean while the Son of God, who yet some days
 Lodg'd in *Bethabara* where *John* baptiz'd,
 Musing and much revolving in his brest,
 How best the mighty work he might begin
 Of Saviour to mankind, and which way first
 Publish his God-like office now mature,
 One day forth walk'd alone, the Spirit leading;
 190 And his deep thoughts, the better to converse
 With solitude, till far from track of men,
 Thought following thought, and step by step led on,
 He entred now the bordering Desert wild,
 And with dark shades and rocks environ'd round,
 His holy Meditations thus pursu'd.

O what a multitude of thoughts at once
 Awakn'd in me swarm, while I consider
 What from within I feel my self, and hear,
 What from without comes often to my ears,
 200 Ill sorting with my present state compar'd.
 When I was yet a Child, no childish play
 To me was pleasing, all my mind was set
 Serious to learn and know, and thence to do
 What might be publick good; my self I thought
 Born to that end, born to promote all truth,
 All righteous things: therefore above my years,
 The Law of God I read and found it sweet,
 Made it my whole delight, and in it grew
 To such perfection, that e're yet my age
 210 Had measur'd twice six years, at our great Feast
 I went into the Temple, there to hear

The

The Teachers of our Law, and to propose
 What might improve my knowledge or their own;
 And was admir'd by all, yet this not all
 To which my Spirit aspir'd, victorious deeds
 Flam'd in my heart, heroic acts, one while
 To rescue *Israel* from the *Roman* yoke,
 Then to subdue and quell o're all the earth
 Brute violence and proud Tyrannick pow'r;
 220 Till truth were freed, and equity restor'd:
 Yet held it more humane, more heavenly first
 By winning words to conquer willing hearts,
 And make persuasion do the work of fear;
 At least to try, and teach the erring Soul
 Nor wilfully mis-doing, but unware
 Missed; the stubborn only to destroy.
 These growing thoughts my Mother soon perceiving
 By words at times cast forth inly rejoic'd,
 And said to me apart, high are thy thoughts
 230 O Son, but nourish them and let them soar
 To what highth sacred vertue and true worth
 Can raise them, though above example high;
 By matchless Deeds express thy matchless Sire.
 For know, thou art no Son of mortal man,
 Though men esteem thee low of Parentage,
 Thy Father is the Eternal King who rules
 All Heaven and Earth, Angels and Sons of men,
 A messenger from God fore-told thy birth
 Conceived in me a Virgin, he fore-told
 240 Thou shouldst be great and sit on *David's* Throne,
 And of thy kingdom there shall be no end.
 At thy Nativity a glorious Quire
 Of Angels in the fields of *Bethlehem* sung
 To Shepherds watching at their folds by night,

And

And told them the Messiah now was born,
 Where they might see him, and to thee they came;
 Directed to the Manger where thou lais't,
 For in the Inn was left no better room:
 A Star, not seen before in Heaven appearing
 250 Guided the Wise Men thither from the East,
 To honour thee with Incense, Myrrh, and Gold,
 By whose bright course led on they found the place,
 Affirming it thy Star new grav'n in Heaven,
 By which they knew the King of *Israel* born.
 Just *Simeon* and Prophetic *Anna*, warn'd
 By Vision found thee in the Temple, and spake
 Before the Altar and the vested Priest,
 Like things of thee to all that present stood,
 This having heard, straight I again resolv'd
 260 The Law and Prophets, searching what was writ
 Concerning the Messiah, to our Scribes
 Known partly, and soon found of whom they spake
 I am; this chiefly, that my way must lie
 Through many a hard assay even to the death,
 Ere I the promis'd Kingdom can attain,
 Or work Redemption for mankind, whose sins
 Full weight must be transferr'd upon my head.
 Yet neither thus dishearten'd or dismay'd,
 The time prefixt I waited, when behold
 270 The Baptist, (of whose birth I oft had heard,
 Not new by sight) now come, who was to come
 Before Messiah and his way prepare.
 I as all others to his Baptism came,
 Which I believ'd was from above; but he
 Strait knew me, and with loudest voice proclaim'd
 Me him (for it was shew'n him so from Heaven)
 Me him whose Harbinger he was; and first

Re

Refus'd on me his Baptism to confer,
 As much his greater, and was hardly won;
 280 But as I rose out of the laving stream,
 Heaven open'd her eternal doors, from whence
 The Spirit descended on me like a Dove,
 And last the sum of all, my Father's voice,
 Audibly heard from Heav'n, pronounc'd me his,
 Me his beloved Son, in whom alone
 He was well pleas'd; by which I knew the time
 Now full, that I no more should live obscure,
 But openly begin, as best becomes
 The Authority which I deriv'd from Heaven.
 290 And now by some strong motion I am led
 Into this Wilderness, to what intent
 I learn not yet, perhaps I need not know;
 For what concerns my knowledge God reveals.
 So spake out Morning Star then in his rise,
 And looking round on every side beheld
 A pathless Desert, dusk with horrid shades;
 The way he came not having mark'd, return
 Was difficult, by humane steps untrod;
 And he still on was led, but with such thoughts
 300 Accompanied of things past and to come
 Lodg'd in his brest, as well might recommend
 Such Solitude before choicest Society.
 Full forty days he pass'd, whether on hill
 Sometimes, anon in shady vale, each night
 Under the covert of some ancient Oak,
 Or Cedar, to defend him from the dew,
 Or harbour'd in one Cave, is not reveal'd;
 Nor tasted humane food, nor hunger felt
 Till those days ended, hunger'd then at last
 310 Among wild Beasts: they at his sight grew mild,

Nor sleeping him nor waking harm'd, his walk
 The fiery Serpent fled, and noxious Worm,
 The Lion and fierce Tiger glar'd aloof.
 But now an aged man in Rural weeds,
 Following, as seem'd, the quest of some stray Ewe,
 Or wither'd sticks to gather; which might serve
 Against a Winters day when winds blow keen,
 To warm him wet return'd from field at Eve,
 He saw approach, who first with curious eye
 320 Perus'd him, then with words thus utt'ed spake.
 Sir, what ill chance hath brought thee to this place
 So far from path or road of men, who pass
 In Troop or Caravan, for single none
 Durst ever, who return'd, and dropt not here
 His Carcass, pin'd with hunger and with droughth?
 I ask the rather, and the more admire,
 For that to me thou seem'st the man, whom late
 Our new baptizing Prophet at the Ford
 Of *Jordan* honour'd so, and call'd thee Son
 330 Of God; I saw and heard, for we sometimes
 Who dwelt this wild, constrain'd by want, come forth
 To Town or Village nigh (nighest is far)
 Where ought we hear, and curious are to hear,
 What happ'ns new; Fame also finds us out.
 To whom the Son of God. Who brought me hither
 Will bring me hence, no other Guide I seek.
 By Miracle he may, reply'd the Swain,
 What other way I see not, for we here
 Live on tough roots and stubs, to thirst inur'd
 340 More than the Camel, and to drink go far,
 Men to much misery and hardship born;
 But if thou be the Son of God, Command
 That out of these hard stones be made thee bread;

So shalt thou save thy self and us relieve
With Food, whereof we wretched seldome taste.

He ended, and the Son of God reply'd.
Think'st thou such force in Bread? is it not written
(For I discern thee other then thou seem'st)
Man lives not by Bread only, but each Word
350 Proceeding from the mouth of God; who fed
Our Fathers here with Manna; in the Mount
Moses was forty days, nor eat nor drank,
And forty days *Eliab* without food
Wandred this barren waste, the same I now:
Why dost thou then suggest to me distrust,
Knowing who I am, as I know who thou art?

Whom thus answer'd th' Arch Fiend now andis-
'Tis true, I am that Spirit unfortunate, (guis'd.
Who leagu'd with millions more in rash revolt
360 Kept not my happy Station, but was driv'n
With them from bliss to the bottomless deep,
Yet to that hideous place not so confin'd
By rigour unconniving, but that oft
Leaving my dolorous Prison I enjoy
Large liberty to round this Globe of Earth,
Or range in th' Air, nor from the Heav'n of Heav'ns
Hath he excluded my resort sometimes.
I came among the Sons of God, when he
Gave up into my hands *Uzzean Job*

370 To prove him, and illustrate his high worth;
And when to all his Angels he propos'd
To draw the proud King *Abab* into fraud
That he might fall in *Ramoth*, they demurring,
I undertook that Office, and the tongues
Of all his flattering Prophets glibb'd with lies
To his destruction, as I had in charge.

For what he bids I do; though I have lost
Much lustre of my native brightness, lost
To be belov'd of God, I have not lost

380 To love, at least contemplate and admire
What I see excellent in good, or fair,
Or vertuous, I should to have lost all sense.
What can be then less in me than desire
To see thee and approach thee, whom I know
Declar'd the Son of God, to hear attent
Thy wisdom, and behold thy God-like deeds?
Men generally think me much a foe
To all mankind: why should I? they to me
Never did wrong or violence, by them

390 I lost not what I lost, rather by them
I gain'd what I have gain'd, and with them dwell
Copartner in these Regions of the World,
If not disposer; lend them oft my aid,
Oft my advice by presages and signs,
And answers, oracles, portents and dreams,
Whereby they may direct their future life.
Envy they say excites me, thus to gain
Companions of my misery and wo.

At first it may be; but long since with wo
400 Never acquainted, now I feel by proof,
That fellowship in pain divides not smart,
Nor lightens aught each mans peculiar load.
Small consolation then, were man adjoin'd:
This wounds me most (what can it less) that Man,
Man fall'n shall be restor'd, I never more.

To whom our Saviour sternly thus reply'd.
Deservedly thou griev'st, compos'd of lies
From the beginning, and in lies wilt end;
Who boast'st release from Hell, and leave to come

41^o Into the Heav'n of Heav'ns; thou com'st indeed,
 As a poor miserable captive thrall,
 Comes to the place where he before had sat
 Among the Prime in Splendour, now depos'd,
 Ejected, emptied, gaz'd, unpitied, shun'd,
 A spectacle of ruin or of scorn
 To all the Host of Heaven; the happy place
 Imports to thee no happiness, no joy,
 Rather inflames thy torment, representing
 Lost bliss, to thee no more communicable,
 42^o So never more in Hell than when in Heaven.
 But thou art serviceable to Heav'ns King.
 Wilt thou impute to obedience what thy fear
 Extorts, or pleasure to do ill excites?
 What but thy malice mov'd thee to misdeem
 Of righteous *Job*, then cruelly to afflict him
 With all afflictions, but his patience won?
 The other service was thy chosen task,
 To be a liar in four hundred mouths;
 For lying is thy sustenance, thy food.
 43^o Yet thou pretend'st to truth; all Oracles
 By thee are giv'n, and what confess more true
 Among the Nations? that hath been thy craft,
 By mixing somewhat true to vent more lies.
 But what have been thy answers, what but dark
 Ambiguous and with double sense deluding,
 Which they who ask'd have seldom understood,
 And not well understood as good not known?
 Who ever by consulting at thy shrine
 Return'd the wiser, or the more instruct
 44^o To flie or follow what concern'd him most,
 And run not sooner to his fatal snare?
 For God hath justly giv'n the Nations up

To thy Delusions; justly, since they fell
 Idolatrous, but when his purpose is
 Among them to declare his Providence
 To thee not known, whence hast thou then thy truth,
 But from him or his Angels President
 In every Province, who themselves disdaining
 To approach thy Temples, give thee in command
 45^o What to the smallest title thou shalt say
 To thy Adorers; thou with trembling fear,
 Or like a Fawning Parasite obey'st;
 Then to thy self ascrib'st the truth fore-told.
 But this thy glory shall be soon retrench'd;
 No more shall thou by oracling abuse
 The Gentiles; henceforth Oracles are ceast,
 And thou no more with Pomp and Sacrifice
 Shalt be enquir'd at *Delphos* or elsewhere,
 At least in vain, for they shall find thee mute.
 46^o God hath now sent his living Oracle
 Into the World to teach his final will,
 And sends his Spirit of Truth henceforth to dwell
 In pious Hearts, and inward Oracle
 To all truth requisite for men to know.
 So spake our Saviour; but the subtle Fiend,
 Though inly stung with anger and disdain,
 Dissembl'd, and this Answer smooth return'd.
 Sharply thou hast insisted on rebuke,
 And urg'd me hard with doings, which not will
 But misery hath rested from me; where
 47^o Easily canst thou find one miserable,
 And not inforc'd oft-times to part from truth;
 If it may stand him more instead to lye,
 Say and unsay, feign, flatter, or abjure?
 But thou art plac'd above me, thou art Lord;

From thee I can and must submit endure
 Check or reproof, and glad to scape so quit.
 Hard are the ways of truth, and rough to walk,
 Smooth on the tongue discours't, pleasing to th' ear,
 450 And tuneable as Sylvan Pipe or Song;
 What wonder then if I delight to hear
 Her dictates from thy mouth? most men admire
 Vertue, who follow not her lore: permit me
 To hear thee when I come (since no man comes)
 And talk at least, though I despair to attain.
 Thy Father, who is holy, wise and pure,
 Suffers the Hypocrite or Atheous Priest
 To tread his Sacred Courts, and minister
 About his Altar, handling holy things,
 490 Praying or vowing, and vouchsaf'd his voice
 To *Balaam* Reprobate, a Prophet yet
 Inspir'd; disdain not such access to me.
 To whom our Saviour with unalter'd brow.
 Thy coming hither, though I know thy scope,
 I bid not or forbid; do as thou find'st
 Permission from above; thou canst not more.
 He added not; and Satan bowing low
 His gray dissimulation, disappear'd
 Into thin Air diffus'd: for now began
 500 Night with her sullen wings to double-shade
 The Desert, Fowls in thir clay nests were couch't;
 And now wild Beasts came forth the woods to roam.

The End of the first Book.

PARADISE



PARADISE REGAIN'D,

The Second BOOK.

MEan while the new-baptiz'd, who yet remain'd
 At *Jordan* with the Baptist, and had seen
 Him whom they heard so late expressly call'd
 Jesus Messiah Son of God declar'd,
 And on that high Authority had believ'd,
 And with him talkt, and with him lodg'd, I mean
Andrew and *Simon*, famous after known
 With others though in Holy Writ not nam'd,
 Now missing him thir joy so lately found,
 10 So lately found, and so abruptly gone,
 Began to doubt, and doubted many days,
 And as the days increas'd, increas'd thir doubt:
 Sometimes they thought he might be only shewn,
 And for a time caught up to God, as once
Moses was in the Mount, and missing long,
 And the great *Thersites* who on fiery wheels
 Rode up to Heaven, yet once again to come.
 Therefore as those young Prophets then with care
 Sought lost *Elijah*, so in each place these
 20 Night to *Bethabara*; in *Jertico*
 The City of Palms, *Ennon*, and *Solena* Old,
Michael

Macchæus and each Town or City wall'd
 On this side the broad lake *Genesaret*,
 Or in *Perea*, but return'd in vain.
 Then on the bank of *Jordan*, by a Creek:
 Where winds with Reeds, and Osiers whisp'ring play
 Plain Fishermen, no greater men them call,
 Close in a Cottage low together got
 Thir unexpected loss and plaints out breath'd.
 30 Alas, from that high hope to what relapse
 Unlook'd for are we fall'n, our eyes beheld
 Messiah certainly now come, so long
 Expected of our Fathers; we have heard
 His words, his wisdom full of grace and truth,
 Now, now, for sure, deliverance is at hand,
 The Kingdom shall to *Israel* be restor'd:
 Thus we rejoyc'd, but soon our joy is turn'd
 Into perplexity and new amaze:
 For whither is he gone, what accident
 40 Hath rapt him from us? will he now retire
 After appearance, and again prolong
 Our expectation? God of *Israel*,
 Send thy Messiah forth, the time is come;
 Behold the Kings of the Earth how they oppress
 Thy chosen, to what highth thir pow'r unjust
 They have exalted, and behind them cast
 All fear of thee, arise and vindicate
 Thy Glory, free thy people from thir yoke,
 But let us wait; thus far he hath perform'd,
 50 Sent his Anointed, and to us reveal'd him,
 By his great Prophet, pointed at and shown,
 In publick, and with him we have convers'd;
 Let us be glad of this, and all our fears
 Lay on his Providence; he will not fail

Nor will withdraw him now, nor will recall,
 Mock us with his blest sight, then snatch him hence,
 Soon we shall see our hope, our joy return.

Thus they out of their plaints new hope resume
 To find whom at the first they found unsought:

60 But to his Mother *Mary*, when she saw
 Others return'd from Baptism, not her Son,
 Nor left at *Jordan*, tidings of him none;
 Within her brest, though calm; her brest though pure,
 Motherly cares and fears got head, and rais'd
 Some troubl'd thoughts, which she in sighs thus clad.

O what avails me now that honour high
 To have conceiv'd of God, or that salute
 Hale highly favour'd, among women blest;
 While I to sorrows am no less advanc't,

70 And fears as eminent, above the lot
 Of other women, by the birth I bore,
 In such a season born when scarce a Shed
 Could be obtain'd to shelter him or me
 From the bleak air; a Stable was our warmth,
 A Manger his, yet soon enforc't to fly
 Thence into *Egypt*, till the Mord'rous King
 Were dead, who sought his life, and missing fill'd
 With Infant blood the streets of *Bethlehem*;
 From *Egypt* home return'd, in *Nazareth*

80 Hath been our dwelling many years, his life
 Private, unactive, calm, contemplative,
 Little suspicious to any King; but now
 Full grown to Man, acknowledg'd, as I hear,
 By *John* the Baptist, and in publick shown,
 Son own'd from Heaven by his Father's voice;
 I look'd for some great change; to Honour? no,
 But trouble, as old *Simeon* plain fore-told,

That to the fall and rising he should be
 Of many in *Israel*, and to a sign
 Spoken against, that through my very Soul
 A sword shall pierce, this is my favour'd lot,
 My Exaltation to Afflictions high;
 Afflicted I may be, it seems, and blest;
 I will not argue that, nor will repine.
 But where delays he now? some great intent
 Conceals him: when twelve years he scarce had seen,
 I lost him, but so found, as well I saw
 He could not loose himself; but went about
 His Father's business; what he meant I mus'd,
 Since understand; much more his absence now
 Thus long to some great purpose he obscures.
 But I to wait with patience am inur'd;
 My heart hath been a store-house long of things
 And sayings laid up, portending strange events.
 Thus *Mary* pondring oft, and oft to mind
 Recalling what remarkably had pass'd
 Since first her Salutation heard, with thoughts
 Meekly compos'd awaited the fulfilling:
 The while her Son tracing the Desert wild,
 Sole but with holiest Meditations fed,
 Into himself descended, and at once
 All his great work to come before him set;
 How to begin, how to accomplish best
 His end of being on Earth, and mission high:
 For Satan with slye preface to return
 Had left him vacant, and with speed was gon
 Up to the middle Region of thick Air,
 Where all his Potentates in Council sate;
 There without sign of boast, or sign of joy
 Sollicitous and blank he thus began.

Prince, Heavens antient Sons, Æthereal Thrones,
 Demonian Spirits now, from the Element
 Each of his reign allotted, rightlier call'd,
 Powers of Fire, Air, Water, and Earth beneath,
 So may we hold our place and these mild seats
 Without new trouble; such an Enemy
 Is ris'n to invade us, whom no less
 Threat'ns our expulsion down to Hell;
 I, as I undertook, and with the vote
 Consenting in full freequence was impow'd,
 Have found him, view'd him, tasted him, but find
 Far other labour to be undergon
 Than when I dealt with *Adam* first of Men,
 Though *Adam* by his Wives allurements fell,
 However to this Man inferior far,
 If he be Man by Mothers side at least,
 With more than humane gifts from Heaven adorn'd,
 Perfections absolute, Graces divine,
 And amplitude of mind to greatest Deeds.
 Therefore I am return'd, lest confidence
 Of my success with *Eve* in Paradise
 Deceive ye to persuasion over-sure
 Of like succeeding here; I summon all
 Rather to be in readiness, with hand
 Or counsel to assist; lest I who erst
 Thought none my equal, now be over match'd.
 So spake the old Serpent doubting, and from all
 With clamour was assur'd thir utmost aid
 At his command; when from amidst them rose
 Belial the dissolute Spirit that fell,
 The sensuallest, and after *Asmodai*
 The fleshliest Incubus, and thus advis'd.
 Set women in his eye and in his walk,

Among daughters of men the fairest found ;
 Many are in each Region passing fair
 As the noon Skie ; more like to Goddesses
 Then Mortal Creatures, gracefull and discreet,
 Expert in amorous Arts, enchanting tongues
 Persuasive, Virgin majesty with mild
 160 And sweet allay'd, yet terrible to approach,
 Skill'd to retire, and in retiring draw
 Hearts after them tangl'd in Amorous Nets.
 Such object hath the power to soft'n and tame
 Severest temper, smooth the rugged'st brow,
 Enerve, and with voluptuous hope dissolve,
 Draw out with credulous desire, and lead
 At will the manliest, resolute'st brest,
 As the Magnetic hardest Iron draws.
 Women, when nothing else, beguil'd the heart
 170 Of wisest *Solomon*, and made him build,
 And made him bow to the Gods of his Wives.
 To whom quick answer Satan thus return'd.
Belial, in much uneven scale thou weigh'st
 All others by thy self; because of old
 Thou thy self doat'st on womankind, admiring
 Thir shape, thir colour, and attractive grace,
 None are, thou think'st, but taken with such toys.
 Before the Flood thou with thy lusty Crew,
 False titl'd Sons of God, roaming the Earth
 180 Cast wanton eyes on the daughters of men,
 And coupl'd with them, and begot a race.
 Have we not seen, or by relation heard,
 In Courts and Regal Chambers how thou lurk'st,
 In Wood or Grove by mossie Fountain side,
 In Valley or green Meadow to way-lay
 Some beauty rare, *Calisto*, *Clymene*,

Daphne, or *Semele*, *Antiope*,
 Or *Amymone*, *Syrinx*, many more
 Too long, then lay'st thy scapes on names ador'd,
 190 *Apollo*, *Neptune*, *Jupiter* or *Pan*,
 Satyr, or Fawn, or Silvan ? But these haunts
 Delight not all, among the Sons of Men,
 How many have with a smile made small account
 Of beauty and her lures, easily scorn'd,
 All her assaults, on worthier things intent ?
 Remember that *Pellean* Conquerour,
 A Youth, how all the Beauties of the East
 He slightly view'd, and slightly overpass'd ;
 How he surnam'd of *Africa* dismiss'd
 200 In his prime youth the fair *Iberian* Maid.
 For *Solomon* he liv'd at ease, and full
 Of honour, wealth, high fare, aim'd not beyond
 Higher design than to enjoy his State ;
 Thence to the bait of Women lay expos'd ;
 But he whom we attempt is wiser far
 Than *Solomon*, of more exalted mind,
 Made and set wholly on the accomplishment
 Of greatest things, what Woman will you find,
 Though of this age the wonder and the fame,
 210 On whom his leisure will vouchsafe an eye
 Of fond desire ? or should she confident,
 As sitting Queen ador'd on Beauties Throne,
 Descend with all her winning charms begirt
 To enamour, as the *Zone* of *Venus* once
 Wrought that effect on *Jove*, so Fables tell ;
 How would one look for his Majestick brow
 Seated as on the top of Vertues hill,
 Discour'ance her despis'd, and put to rout,
 All her array ; her female pride deject,

220 Or turn to reverent awe? for Beauty stands
In the admiration only of weak minds
Led captive; cease to admire, and all her Plumes
Fall flat and shrink into a trivial toy,
At every sudden slighting quite abasht:
Therefore with manlier objects we must try
His constancy, with such as have more shew
Of worth, of honour, glory, and popular praise;
Rocks whereon greatest Men have ofttest wreck'd;
Or that which only seems to satisfy

230 Lawfull desires of Nature, nor beyond;
And now I know he hungers where no food
Is to be found, in the wild Wilderness,
The rest commit to me, I shall let pass
No advantage, and his strength as oft assay.
He eas'd, and heard their grant in loud acclaim;
Then forthwith to him takes a chosen band
Of Spirits likest to himself in guile
To be at hand, and at his beck appear,
If cause were to unfold some active Scene

240 Of various Persons each to know his part;
Then to the Desert takes with these his flight;
Where still from shade to shade the Son of God
After forty days fasting had remain'd,
Now hungry first, and to himself thus said.

Where will this end? four times ten days I have
Wandering this woody maze, and humane food (pals'd
Nor tasted, nor had appetite; that Fast
To Vertue I impute not, or count part
Of what I suffer here; if Nature need not,
250 Or God support Nature without repast
Though needing, what praise is it to endure?
But now I feel, I hunger, which declares,

Nature

Nature hath need of what she asks; yet God
Can satisfy that need some other way,
Though hunger still remain: so it remain
Without this bodies wasting, I content me,
And from the sting of Famine fear no harm,
Nor mind it, fed with better thoughts that feed
Me hungering more to do my Fathers will.

260 It was the hour of night, when thus the Son
Commun'd in silent walk, then laid him down
Under the hospitable covert nigh
Of trees thick interwoven; there he slept,
And dream'd, as appetite is wont to dream,
Of meats and drinks, Natures refreshment sweet;
Him thought, he by the Brook of *Cberith* stood
And saw the Ravens with their horny beaks
Food to *Elijah* bringing Even and Morn,
Though ravenous. taught to abstain from what they
270 He saw the Prophet also how he fled (brought:
Into the Desert, and how there he slept
Under a Juniper; then how awak't,
He found his Supper on the coals prepar'd,
And by the Angel was bid rise and eat,
And eat the second time after repose,
The strength whereof suffic'd him forty days;
Sometimes that with *Elijah* he partook,
Or as a guest with *Daniel* at his Pullè.
Thus wore out night, and now the Herald Lark
280 Left his ground-nest, high towering to discri
The morns approach, and greet her with his Song:
As lightly from his grassy couch up rose
Our Saviour, and found all was but a dream,
Fasting he went to sleep, and fasting wak'd.
Up to a hill anon his steps he rear'd,

From

From whose high top to ken the prospect round,
 If Cottage were in view, Sheep-cote or Herd;
 But Cottage, Herd or Sheep-cote none he saw,
 Only in a bottom saw a pleasant Grove,
 90 With chaunt of tunefull Birds resounding loud;
 Thither he bent his way, determin'd there
 To rest at noon, and entr'd soon the shade
 High roof'd and walks beneath, and alleys brown
 That open'd in the midst a woody Scene,
 Natures own work it seem'd (Nature taught Art)
 And to a Superstitious eye the haunt
 Of Wood-Gods and Wood-Nymphs; he view'd it
 When suddenly a man before him stood, (round,
 Not rustic as before, but seemlier clad,
 100 As one in City, or Court, or Palace bred,
 And with fair speech these words to him address'd.
 With granted leave officious I return,
 But much more wonder that the Son of God
 In this wild solitude so long should bide
 Of all things destitute, and well I know,
 Not without hunger. Others of some note,
 As story tells, have trod this Wilderness;
 The fugitive Bond-woman with her Son
 Outcast *Nebaioth*, yet found he relief
 110 By a providing Angel; all the race
 Of *Israel* here had famish'd, had not God
 Rain'd from Heaven Manna, and that Prophet bold
 Native of *Thebes* wandring here was fed
 Twice by a voice inviting him to eat,
 Of thee these forty days none hath regard,
 Forty and more deserted here indeed.
 To whom thus Jesus; what conclud'st thou hence?
 They all had need, I as thou see'st have none.

How hast thou hunger then? Satan reply'd,
 120 Tell me if Food were now before thee set,
 Would'st thou not eat? Thereafter as I like
 The giver, answer'd Jesus. Why should that
 Cause thy refusal, said the subtle Fiend,
 Hast thou not right to all Created things,
 Ow not all Creatures by just right to thee
 Duty and service, nor to stay till bid,
 But tender all their power? nor mention I
 Meats by the Law unclean, or offer'd first
 To Idols, those young *Daniel* could refuse;
 130 Nor proffer'd by an Enemy, though who
 Would scruple that, with want oppress'd? Behold
 Nature asham'd, or better to express,
 Troubl'd that thou should'st hunger, hath purvey'd
 From all the Elements her choicest store
 To treat thee as befits, and as her Lord
 With honour, only deign to sit and eat.
 He spake no dream, for as his words had end,
 Our Saviour lifting up his eyes beheld
 In ample space under the broadest shade
 140 A Table richly spread, in Regal mode,
 With dishes pill'd, and meats of noblest sort
 And savour, Beasts of chase, or Fowl of game,
 In Pastry built, or from the spit, or boyl'd,
 Gris-amber-steam'd; all Fish from Sea or Shore,
 Freshet, or purling Brook, of shell or fin,
 And exquisitest name, for which was drain'd
Pontus and *Lucrine* Bay, and *Afric* Coast.
 Alas how simple, to these Cates compar'd,
 Was that crude Apple that diverted *Eve*!
 150 And at a stately side-board by the wine
 That fragrant smell diffus'd, in order stood

Tall stripling youths rich clad, of fairer hew
 Than *Ganymed* or *Hylas*, distant more
 Under the Trees now trip'd, now solemn stood
 Nymphs of *Diana's* train, and *Naiades*
 With fruits and flowers from *Amalthea's* horn,
 And Ladies of the *Hesperides*, that seem'd
 Fairer than feign'd of old, or fabl'd since
 Of Fairy Damsels met in forest wide
 360 By Knights of *Logres*, or of *Lyones*,
Lancelot or *Pelleas*, or *Pellenore*,
 And all the while harmonious Aires were heard
 Of chiming strings, or charming pipes and winds
 Of gentlest gale *Arabian* odors fann'd
 From their soft wings, and *Flora's* earliest smells.
 Such was the splendour, and the Tempter now
 His invitation earnestly renew'd.

What doubts the Son of God to sit and eat?
 These are not fruits forbidden, no interdict
 370 Defends the touching of these Viands pure,
 Their taste no knowledge, works at least of evil,
 But life preserves, destroys life's enemy,
 Hunger, with sweet restorative delight.
 All these are Spirits of Air, and Woods, and Springs,
 Thy gentle Ministers, who come to pay
 Thee homage, and acknowledge thee their Lord:
 What doubt'st thou Son of God? sit down and eat.

To whom thus Jesus temperately reply'd:
 Said'st thou not that to all things I had right?
 380 And who withholds my pow'r that right to use?
 Shall I receive by gift what of my own,
 When and where likes me best, I can command?
 I can at will, doubt not, as soon as thou,
 Command a Table in this Wilderness,

And call swift flights of Angels ministrant
 Array'd in Glory on my cup to attend:
 Why shouldst thou then obtrude this diligence,
 In vain, where no acceptance it can find,
 And with my hunger what hast thou to do?
 390 Thy pompous Delicacies I contemn,
 And count thy specious gifts no gifts but guiles.
 To whom thus answer'd Satan malecontent:
 That I have also power to give thou seest,
 If of that pow'r I bring thee voluntary
 What I might have bestow'd on whom I pleas'd,
 And rather opportunely in this place
 Chose to impart to thy apparent need,
 Why shouldst thou not accept it? but I see
 What I can do or offer is suspect;
 400 Of these things others quickly will dispose
 Whose pains have earn'd the far set spoil. With that
 Both Table and Provision vanish quite
 With sound of Harpies wings, and Talons heard;
 Only the importune Tempter still remain'd,
 And with these words his temptation pursu'd.

By hunger, that each other Creature tames,
 Thou art not to be harm'd, therefore not mov'd;
 Thy temperance invincible besides,
 For no allurement yields to appetite,
 410 And all thy heart is set on high designs,
 High actions; but wherewith to be achiev'd?
 Great acts require great means of enterprise,
 Thou art unknow, unfriended, low of Birth,
 A Carpenter thy Father known, thy self
 Bred up in poverty and streights at home;
 Lost in a Desert here and hunger-bit:
 Which way or from what hope dost thou aspire

To greatness? whence Authority deriv'd,
 What Followers, what Retinue canst thou gain,
 420 Or at thy heels the dizzy Multitude,
 Longer than thou canst feed them on thy cost?
 Money brings Honour, Friends, Conquest and Realms;
 What rais'd *Antipater* the *Edomite*,
 And his Son *Herod* plac'd on *Juda's* Throne;
 (Thy throne) but gold that got him puissant friends?
 Therefore, if at great things thou wouldst arrive,
 Get Riches first, get Wealth, and Treasure heap,
 Not difficult, if thou hearken to me,
 Riches are mine, Fortune is in my hand;
 430 They whom I favour thrive in wealth amain,
 While Vertue, Valour, Wisdom sit in want.
 To whom thus Jesus patiently reply'd;
 Yet Wealth without these three is impotent,
 To gain dominion or to keep it gain'd.
 Witness those ancient Empires of the Earth,
 In hight of all thir flowing wealth dissolv'd:
 But men endur'd with these have oft attain'd
 In lowest poverty to highest deeds;
Gideon and *Jephtha*, and the Shepherd lad,
 440 Whose off-spring on the Throne of *Juda* sat
 So many Ages, and shall yet regain
 That seat, and reign in *Israel* without end.
 Among the Heathen, (for throughout the World
 To me is not unknown what hath been done
 Worthy of Memorial) canst thou not remember
Quintius, *Fabritius*, *Curius*, *Regulus*?
 For I esteem those names of men so poor
 Who could do mighty things, and could contemn
 Riches though offer'd from the hand of Kings.
 450 And what in me seems wanting, but that I

May also in this poverty as soon
 Accomplish what they did, perhaps and more?
 Extol not Riches then, the toy of Fools,
 The wise mans cumbrance if not snare, more apt
 To slacken Vertue, and abate her edge,
 Than prompt her to do aught may merit praise,
 What if with like aversion I reject
 Riches and Realms; yet not for that a Crown,
 Golden in shew, is but a wreath of thorns,
 460 Brings dangers, troubles, cares, and sleepless nights
 To him who wears the Regal Diadem,
 When on his shoulders each mans burden lies;
 For therein stands the office of a King,
 His Honour, Vertue, Merit and chief Praise,
 That for the Publick all this weight he bears.
 Yet he who reigns within himself, and rules
 Passions, Desires, and Fears, is more a King;
 Which every wise and vertuous man attains:
 And who attains not, ill aspires to rule
 470 Cities of men, or head-strong Multitudes,
 Subject himself to Anarchy within,
 Or lawless passions in him which he serves.
 But to guide Nations in the way of truth
 By saving Doctrine, and from errour lead
 To know, and knowing worship God aright,
 Is yet more Kingly, this attracts the Soul,
 Governs the inner man, the nobler part,
 That other o're the body only reigns,
 And oft by force, which to a generous mind
 480 So reigning can be no sincere delight.
 Besides to give a Kingdom hath been thought
 Greater and nobler done, and to lay down
 Far more magnanimous, than to assume.

Riches are needless then, both for themselves,
And for thy reason why they should be sought,
To gain a Scepter, oft' it better mis's't.

The End of the Second Book.

PARADISE



PARADISE REGAIN'D.

The Third BOOK.

SO spake the Son of God, and Satan stood
A while as mute confounded what to say,
What to reply, confuted and convinc't
Of his weak arguing, and fallacious drift;
At length collecting all his Serpent wiles,
With soothing words renew'd, him thus accosts.
I see thou know'st what is of use to know,
What best to say canst say, to do canst do;
Thy actions to thy words accord, thy words
To thy large heart give utterance due, thy heart
Contains of good, wise, just, the perfect shape.
Should Kings and Nations from thy mouth consult,
Thy Counsel would be as the Oracle
Urim and Thummim, those oraculous gems
On Aaron's breast: or tongue of Seers old
Infallible; or wert thou fought to deeds
That might require th' array of war thy skill
Of conduct would be such, that all the world
Could not sustain thy Prowess, or subsist
In battel, though against thy few in arms.
These God-like Vertues wherefore dost thou hide?

Affecting private life, or more obscure
 In savage Wilderderneſs, wherefore deprive
 All Earth her wonder at thy acts, thy ſelf
 The ſame and glory, glory the reward
 That ſole excites to high attempts the flame
 Of moſt erected Spirits, moſt temper'd pure
 Ætherial, who all pleaſures elſe deſpiſe,
 All treaſures and all gain eſteem as dross,
 20 And dignities and powers all but the higheſt?
 Thy years are ripe, and over-ripe, the ſon
 Of *Macedonian Philip* had e're theſe
 Won *Aſia* and the Throne of *Cyrus* held
 At his diſpoſe, young *Scipio* had brought down
 The *Cartaginian* pride, young *Pompey* quell'd
 The *Pontic* King and in triumph had rode.
 Yet years, and to ripe years judgment mature,
 Quench not the thirſt of glory, but augment.
 Great *Julius*, whom now all the world admires
 40 The more he grew in years, the more inflam'd
 With glory, wept that he had liv'd ſo long
 In glorious: but thou yet art not too late.

To whom our Saviour calmly thus reply'd.
 Thou neither doſt perſuade me to ſeek wealth
 For Empires ſake, nor Empire to affect
 For glories ſake by all thy argument.
 For what is glory but the blaze of fame,
 The peoples praife, if always praife unmixt?
 And what the people but a herd confus'd,
 60 A miſcellaneous rabble, who extol
 Things vulgar, and well weigh'd, ſcarce worth the
 They praife and they admire they know not what;
 And know not whom, but as one leads the other;
 And what delight to be by ſuch extoll'd,

To

To live upon thir tongues and be thir talk,
 Of whom to be diſprais'd were no ſmall praife?
 His lot who dares be ſingularly good.
 Th' intelligent among them and the wiſe
 Are few, and glory ſcarce of few is rais'd.
 60 This is true glory and renown, when God
 Looking on the Earth, with approbation marks
 The juſt man, and devulges him through Heaven
 To all his Angels, who with true applauſe
 Recount his praifes; thus he did to *Job*,
 When to extend his fame through Heaven & Earth,
 As thou to thy reproach mayſt well remember,
 He ask'd thee, haſt thou ſeen my ſervant *Job*?
 Famous he was in Heaven, on Earth leſs known;
 Where glory is falſe glory, attributed
 70 To things not glorious, men not worthy of fame.
 They err who count it glorious to ſubdue
 By Conqueſt far and wide, to over-run
 Large Countries, and in field great Battels win,
 Great Cities by aſſault: what do theſe Worthies,
 But rob and ſpoil, burn, ſlaughter, and enſlave
 Peaceable Nations, neighbouring, or remote,
 Made Captive, yet deſerving freedom more
 Than thoſe thir Conquerours, who leave behind
 Nothing but ruin whereſoe'er they rove,
 80 And all the flouriſhing works of peace deſtroy,
 Then ſwell with pride, and muſt be titl'd Gods,
 Great Benefactors of mankind, Deliverers,
 Worſhip't with Temple, Prieſt and Sacrifice;
 One is the Son of *Jove*, of *Mars* the other,
 Till Conquerour Death diſcover them ſcarce men,
 Rowling in brutiſh vices, and deform'd,
 Violent or ſhamefull death thir due reward.

But if there be in glory aught of good,
 It may by means far different be attain'd
 20 Without ambition, war, or violence;
 By deeds of peace, by wisdom eminent,
 By patience, temperance; I mention still
 Him whom thy wrongs with Saintly patience born,
 Made famous in a Land and times obscure;
 Whose names not now with honour patient *Job*?
 Poor *Socrates* (who next more memorable?)
 By what he taught and suffer'd for so doing,
 For truths sake suffering death unjust, lives now
 Equal in fame to proudest Conquerours.
 100 Yet if for fame and glory aught be done,
 Aught suffer'd; if young *African* for fame
 His wasted Country freed from *Punic* rage,
 The deed becomes unprais'd, the man at least,
 And loses, though but verbal, his reward.
 Shall I seek glory then, as vain men seek
 Oft not deserv'd? I seek not mine, but his
 Who sent me, and thereby witness whence I am.
 To whom the Tempter murmuring thus reply'd.
 Think not so slight of glory; therein least
 110 Resembling thy great Father: he seeks glory,
 And for his glory all things made, all things
 Orders and Governs, nor content in Heaven
 By all his Angels glorifi'd, requires
 Glory from men, from all men good or bad,
 Wise or unwise, no difference, no exemption;
 Above all Sacrifice, or hallow'd gift
 Glory he requires, and glory he receives
 Promiscuous from all Nations, Jew, or Greek,
 Or Barbarous, nor exception hath declar'd;
 120 From us his foes pronounc't glory he exacts.
 To whom our Saviour fervently reply'd,

And reason; since his word all things produc'd,
 Though chiefly not for glory as prime end,
 But to shew forth his goodness and impart
 His good communicable to every soul
 Freely; of whom what could he less expect
 Then glory and benediction, that it thanks,
 The slightest, easiest, readiest recompence
 From them who could return him nothing else,
 130 And not returning that would likeliest render
 Contempt instead, dishonour, obloquy?
 Hard recompence, unsuitable return
 For so much good, so much beneficence.
 But why should man seek glory? who of his own
 Hath nothing, and to whom nothing belongs
 But condemnation, ignominy, and shame?
 Who for so many benefits receiv'd
 Turn'd recreant to God, ingrate and false,
 And so of all true good himself despoil'd,
 140 Yet, sacrilegious, to himself would take
 That which to God alone of right belongs;
 Yet so much bounty is in God, such grace,
 That who advance his glory, not their own,
 Them he himself to glory will advance.
 So spake the Son of God; and here again
 Satan had not to answer, but stood struck
 with guilt of his own sin, for he himself
 Insatiable of glory had lost all,
 Yet of another Plea bethought him soon.
 150 Of glory, as thou wilt, said he, so deem,
 Worth or not worth their seeking, let it pass:
 But to a Kingdom thou art born, ordain'd
 To sit upon thy Father *David's* Throne;
 By Mothers side thy Father, though thy right

Be now in powerfull hands, that will not part
 Easily from possession won with arms;
Judea now and all the promis'd land
 Reduc't a Province under *Roman* yoke,
 Obeys *Tiberius*; nor is always rul'd
 160 With temperate sway; oft have they violated
 The Temple, oft the Law with foul affronts,
 Abominations rather, as did once
Antiochus: and think'st thou to regain
 Thy right by sitting still or thus retiring?
 So did not *Machabeus*: he indeed
 Retir'd unto the Desert, but with arms;
 And o're a mighty King so oft prevail'd
 That by strong hand his Family obtain'd,
 Though Priests, the Crown, and *Dauids* Throne u-
 170 With *Modin* and her Suburbs once content. (surp'd,
 If Kingdom move thee not, let move thee Zeal,
 And duty; Zeal and duty are not slow;
 But on Occasions forelock watchfull wait.
 They themselves rather are occasion best,
 Zeal of thy Fathers house, Duty to free
 Thy Country from her Heathen servitude;
 So shalt thou best fulfill, best verifie
 The Prophets old, who sung thy endless reign,
 The happier reign the sooner it begins,
 180 Reign then; what canst thou better do the while?
 To whom our Saviour answer thus return'd.
 All things are best fulfill'd in their due time,
 And time there is for all things, Truth hath said:
 If of my reign prophetic Writ hath told,
 That it shall never end, so when begin
 The Father in his purpose hath decreed,
 He in whose hand all times and seasons roul.

What if he hath decreed that I shall first
 Be try'd in humble state, and things adverse,
 190 By tribulations, injuries, insults,
 Contempts, and scorns, and snares, and violence,
 Suffering, abstaining, quietly expecting
 Without distrust or doubt, that he may know
 What I can suffer, how obey? who best
 Can suffer, best can do; best reign, who first
 Well hath obey'd; just tryal e're I merit
 My exaltation without change or end.
 But what concerns it thee when I begin
 My everlasting Kingdom, why art thou
 200 Sollicitous, what moves thy inquisition?
 Know'st thou not that my rising is thy fall,
 And my promotion will be thy destruction?
 To whom the Tempter inly rackt reply'd.
 Let that come when it comes; all hope is lost
 Of my reception into grace; what worse?
 For where no hope is left, is left no fear;
 If there be worse, the expectation more
 Of worse torments me than the feeling can.
 I would be at the worst; worst is my Port,
 210 My harbour and my ultimate repose,
 The end I would attain, my final good.
 My error was my error, and my crime
 My crime; whatever for it self condemn'd,
 And will alike be punish'd; whether thou
 Reign or reign not; though to that gentle brow
 Willingly I could flie, and hope thy reign,
 From that placid aspect and meek regard,
 Rather than aggravate my evil state,
 Would stand between me and thy Fathers ire,
 220 (Whose ire I dread more than the fire of Hell.)

44 *Paradise Regain'd.*

A shelter and a kind of shading cool
 Interposition, as a summers cloud.
 If I then to the worst that can be hast,
 Why move thy feet so slow to what is best,
 Happiest both to thy self and all the world,
 That thou who worthiest art should'st be thir King?
 Perhaps thou lingrest in deep thoughts detain'd
 Of the enterprize so hazardous and high;
 No wonder, for though in thee be united
 230 What of perfection can in man be found,
 Or human nature can receive, consider
 Thy life hath yet been private, most part spent
 At home, scarce view'd the *Gallilean* Towns,
 And once a year *Jerusalem*, few days
 Short sojourn; and what thence could'st thou observe?
 The world thou hast not seen, much less her glory,
 Empires, and Monarchs, and thir radiant Courts,
 Best school of best experience, quickest in sight
 In all things that to greatest actions lead.
 240 The wisest, unexperienc't, will be ever
 Timorous and loth, with novice modesty,
 (As he who seeking Asses found a Kingdom)
 Irresolute, unhardy, unadventurous:
 But I will bring thee where thou soon shalt quit
 Those rudiments, and see before thine eyes
 The Monarchies of the Earth, thir pomp and state,
 Sufficient introduction to inform
 Thee, of thy self so apt, in regal Arts,
 And regal Mysteries; that thou may'st know
 250 How best their opposition to withstand.
 With that (such power was giv'n him then) he took
 The Son of God up to a Mountain high.
 It was a Mountain at whose verdant feet

Paradise Regain'd. 45

A spacious plain out stretch't in circuit wide
 Lay pleasant; from his side two rivers flow'd,
 Th' one winding, the other strait and left between
 Fair Champain with less rivers interveind,
 Then meeting joyn'd their tribute to the Sea,
 Fertil of corn the glebe, of oyl and wine,
 260 With herds the pastures throng'd, with flocks the hills,
 Huge Cities and high tow'r'd, that well might seem
 The seats of mightiest Monarchs, and so large
 The Prospect was, that here and there was room
 For barren desert fountainless and dry.
 To this high mountain top the Tempter brought
 Our Saviour, and new train of words began.
 Well have we speeded, and o're hill and dale,
 Forest and field, and flood, Temples and Towers
 Cut shorter many a league; here thou behold'st
Assyria and her Empires ancient bounds,
 270 *Araxes* and the *Caspian* lake, thence on
 As far as *Indus* East, *Euphrates* West,
 And oft beyond; to South the *Persian* Bay,
 And inaccessible the *Arabian* drouth:
 Here *Ninevee*, of length within her wall
 Several days journey, built by *Ninus* old,
 Of that first golden Monarchy the seat,
 And seat of *Salmanassar*, whose success
Israel in long captivity still mourns;
 There *Babylon* the wonder of all tongues,
 280 As ancient, but rebuilt by him who twice
Judah and all thy Father *David's* house
 Led captive, and *Jerusalem* laid waste,
 Till *Cyrus* set them free; *Persepolis*
 His City there thou seest, and *Bactra* there;
Ecbatana her structure vast there shews,

And *Hecatompylos* her hundred gates,
 There *Susa* by *Choaspes*, amber stream,
 The drink of none but Kings; of later fame
 Built by *Emathian*, or by *Parthian* hands,
 290 The great *Seleucia*, *Nisibis*, and there
Artaxata, *Teredon*, *Tesiphon*,
 Turning with easie eye thou may'st behold.
 All these the *Parthian*, now some Ages past,
 By great *Arfaces* led, who founded first
 That Empire, under his dominion holds
 From the luxurious Kings of *Antioch* won.
 And just in time thou com'st to have a view
 Of his great power; for now the *Parthian* King
 In *Ctesiphon* hath gather'd all his Host
 300 Against the *Scythian*, whose incursions wild
 Have wasted *Sogdiana*; to her aid
 He marches now in halt; see, though from far,
 His thousands, in what Martial equipage
 They issue forth, Steel Bows, and Shafts their arms
 Of equal dread in flight, or in pursuit;
 All Horsemen, in which fight they most excel;
 See how in warlike Muster they appear,
 In Rhombs and wedges, and half-moons, and wings.
 He look't and saw what numbers numberless
 310 The city gates out pour'd, light armed Troops
 In coats of Mail and Military pride;
 In Mail thir horses clad, yet fleet and strong,
 Prauncing their riders bore, the flower and choice
 Of many Provinces from bound to bound;
 From *Arachosia*, from *Gandaoor* East,
 And *Margiana* to the *Hircanian* cliffs
 Of *Caucasus*, and dark *Iberian* dales,
 From *Atropatia* and the neighbouring plains

Of *Adiabene*, *Media*, and the South
 320 Of *Susiana*, to *Balsara's* hav'n.
 He saw them in thir forms of battel rang'd,
 How quick they wheel'd, and flying behind them shot
 Sharp fleet of arrowy shower against the face
 Of thir pursuers, and overcame by flight;
 The field all iron cast a gleaming brown,
 Nor wanted clouds of foot, nor on each horn,
 Cuirassiers all in steel for standing fight;
 Chariots or Elephants endorst with Towers
 Of Archers, nor of labouring Pioners
 330 A multitude with Spades and Axes arm'd
 To lay hills plain, fell woods, or valleys fill,
 Or where plain was raise hill, or overlay
 With bridges rivers proud, as with a yoke;
 Mules after these, Camels and Dromedaries,
 And Waggon's fraught with Utensils of war.
 Such forces met not, nor so wide a Camp,
 When *Agrican* with all his Northern powers
 Besieg'd *Albracca*, as Romances tell;
 The city of *Gallaphrone*, from thence to win
 340 The fairest of her Sex *Angelica*
 His daughter, fought by many Prowest Knights,
 Both *Paynim*, and the Peers of *Charlemaine*.
 Such and so numerous was thir Chivalry;
 At sight whereof the Fiend yet more presum'd,
 And to our Saviour thus his words renew'd.
 That thou may'st know I seek not to engage
 Thy vertue, and not every way secure
 On no slight grounds thy safety; hear, and mark
 To what end I have brought thee hither and shewn
 350 All this fair sight; thy Kingdom though foretold
 By Prophet or by Angel, unless thou

48 *Paradise Regain'd.*

Endeavour, as thy Father *David* did,
 Thou never shalt obtain; prediction still
 In all things, and all men, supposes means
 Without means us'd, what it predicts revokes.
 But say thou wert possess'd of *David's* Throne
 By free consent of all, none opposite,
Samaritan or *Jew*; how could'st thou hope
 Long to enjoy it quiet and secure,
 360 Between two such enclosing enemies
Roman and *Parthian*? therefore one of these
 Thou must make sure thy own, the *Parthian* first
 By my advice, as nearer and of late
 Found able by invasion to annoy
 Thy country, and captive lead away her Kings
Antigonus, and old *Hyrcaus* bound,
 Maugre the *Roman*: it shall be my task
 To render thee the *Parthian* at dispose;
 Chuse which thou wilt by conquest or by league.
 370 By him thou shalt regain, without him not,
 That which alone can truly reinstall thee
 In *David's* royal Seat, his true Successor,
 Deliverance of thy brethren, those ten Tribes
 Whose off-spring in his Territory yet serve
 In *Habor*, and among the *Medes* dispers'd
 Ten Sons of *Jacob*, two of *Joseph* lost
 Thus long from *Israel*; serving as of old
 Their Fathers in the land of *Egypt* serv'd,
 This offer sets before thee to deliver.
 380 These if from servitude thou shalt restore
 To thir inheritance, then, nor till then,
 Thou on the Throne of *David* in full glory,
 From *Egypt* to *Euphrates* and beyond
 Shalt reign, and *Rome* or *Cæsar* not need fear.

Paradise Regain'd. 49

To whom our Saviour answer'd thus unmov'd.
 Much ostentation vain of fleshly arm,
 And fragile arms, much instrument of war
 Long in preparing, soon to nothing brought,
 Before mine eyes thou hast set; and in my ear
 390 Vented much policy, and projects deep
 Of enemies, of aids, battels and leagues,
 Plausible to the World, to me worth naught.
 Means I must use thou say'st, prediction else
 Will unpredict and fail me of the Throne:
 My time I told thee, (and that time for thee
 Were better farthest off) is not yet come;
 When that comes think not thou to find me slack
 On my part aught endeavouring, or to need
 Thy politic maxims, or that cumbersome
 400 Luggage of War there shewn me, argument
 Of human weakness rather than of strength.
 My Brethren, as thou call'st them; those Ten Tribes
 I must deliver, if I mean to reign
David's true heir, and his full Scepter sway
 To just extent over all *Israel's* Sons;
 But whence to thee this zeal, where was it then
 For *Israel*, or for *David*, or his Throne,
 When thou stood'st up his Tempter to the pride
 Of numbring *Israel*, which cost the lives
 410 Of three score and ten thousand *Israelites*
 By three days Pestilence? such was thy zeal
 To *Israel* then, the same that now to me.
 As for those captive Tribes, themselves were they
 Who wrought their own captivity, fell off
 From God to worship Calves, the Deities
 Of *Egypt*, *Baal* next and *Ashtaroth*,
 And all the Idolatries of Heathen round,

Besides thir other worse than heathenish crimes;
 Nor in the land of their captivity
 430 Humbled themselves or penitent besought
 The God of their Fore-fathers; but so dy'd
 Impenitent, and left a race behind
 Like to themselves, distinguishable scarce
 From Gentils, but by Circumcision vain,
 And God with Idols in their worship joyn'd.
 Should I of these the liberty regard,
 Who freed, as to their antient Patrimony,
 Unhumbld, unrepentant, unreform'd,
 Headlong would follow; and to thir Gods perhaps
 430 Of *Bethel* and of *Dan*? no, let them serve
 Thir enemies, who serve Idols with God.
 Yet he at length, time to himself best known,
 Remembring *Abraham* by some wond'rous call
 May bring them back repentant and sincere,
 And at their passing cleave the *Assyrian* flood,
 While to their native land with joy they hast,
 As the Red Sea and *Jordan* once he cleft,
 When to the promis'd land thir Fathers pass'd;
 To his due time and providence I leave them.
 440 So spake *Israels* true King, and to the Fiend
 Made answer meet, that made void all his wiles.
 So fares it when with truth falshood contends.

The End of the Third Book.



PARADISE REGAIN'D.

The Fourth BOOK.

P Erplex'd and troubl'd at his bad success
 The Tempter stood, nor had what to reply,
 Discover'd in his fraud, thrown from his hope,
 So oft, and the persuasive Rhetoric
 That sleek't his tongue, and won so much on *Eve*,
 So little here, nay lost; but *Eve* was *Eve*,
 This far his over-match, who self deceiv'd
 And rash, before-hand had no better weigh'd
 The strength he was to cope with, or his own:
 10 But as a man who had been matchless held
 In cunning, over-reach't where least he thought,
 To save his credit, and for very spight
 Still will be tempting him who toys him still,
 And never cease, though to his shame the more;
 Or as a swarm of flies in vintage time,
 About the wine-press where sweet moust is pow'd,
 Beat off, returns as oft with humming sound;
 Or surging waves against a solid rock,
 Though all to shivers dash't, the assault renew,
 20 Vain battery, and in froth or bubbles end;
 So Satan, whom repulse upon repulse

Met ever; and to shamefull silence brought,
 Yet gives not o're though desperate of success,
 And his vain importunity pursues.
 He brought our Saviour to the Western side
 Of that high mountain, whence he might behold
 Another plain, long but in bredth not wide,
 Wash'd by the Southern Sea, and on the North
 To equal length back'd with a ridge of hills
 30 That screen'd the fruits of th' earth and seats of men
 From cold *Septentrion* blasts, thence in the midst
 Divided by a river, of whose banks
 On each side an Imperial City stood,
 With Towers and Temples proudly elevate
 On seven small Hills, with Palaces adorn'd,
 Porches and Theatres, Baths, Aqueducts,
 Statues and Trophees, and Triumphal Arcs,
 Gardens and Groves presented to his eyes,
 Above the hight of Mountains interpos'd.
 40 By what strange Parallax or Optick skill
 Of vision multiplied through air, or glass
 Of Telescope, were curious to enquire:
 And now the Tempter thus his silence broke.

The City which thou seest no other deem
 Then great and glorious *Rome*, Queen of the Earth
 So far renown'd, and with the spoils enricht
 Of Nations; there the Capitol thou seest
 Above the rest lifting his stately head
 On the *Tarpeian* rock, her Cittadel
 50 Impregnable, and there Mount *Palatine*
 The Imperial Palace, compass huge, and high
 The Structure, skill of noblest Architects,
 With gilded battlements, conspicuous far,
 Turrets and Terraces, and glittering Spires.

Many

Many a fair Edifice besides, more like
 Houses of Gods (so well I have dispos'd
 My Aery Microscope) thou may'st behold
 Outside and inside both, pillars and roofs
 Carv'd work, the hand of fam'd Artificers
 60 In Cedar, Marble, Ivory or Gold.
 Thence to the gates cast round thine eye, and see
 What conflux issuing forth, or entring in,
 Pretors, Proconsuls to thir Provinces
 Hastning or on return, in robes of State;
 Lictors and rods the ensigns of thir power,
 Legions and Cohorts, turmes of horse and wings:
 Or Embassies from Regions far remote
 In various habits on the *Appian* road,
 Or on the *Emilian*, some from farthest South,
 70 *Syene*, and where the shadow both way falls,
Meroe *Nilotic* Isle, and more to West,
 The Realm of *Bocchus* to the Black-moor Sea;
 From the *Asian* Kings and *Parthian* among these,
 From *India* and the golden *Chersoness*,
 And utmost *Indian* Isle *Taprobane*,
 Dusk faces with white filken Turbants wreath'd:
 From *Gallia*, *Gades*, and the *Brittish* West,
Germans and *Scythians*, and *Sarmatians* North
 Beyond *Danubius* to the *Tauric* Pool.
 80 All Nations now to *Rome* obedience pay,
 To *Rome's* great Emperour, whose wide domain
 In ample Territory, wealth and power,
 Civility of manners, Arts, and Arms,
 And long Renown thou justly may'st prefer
 Before the *Parthian*; these two Thrones except,
 The rest are barbarous, and scarce worth the sight,
 Shar'd among petty Kings too far remov'd;

D 3

These

54 *Paradise Regain'd.*

These having shewn thee, I have shewn thee all
The kingdoms of the World, and all thir glory.
50 This Emperour hath no Son, and now is old,
Old and lascivious, and from *Rome* retir'd
To *Caprea* an Island small but strong
On the *Campanian* shore, with purpose there
His horrid lusts in private to enjoy,
Committing to a wicked Favourite
All publick cares, and yet of him suspicious,
Hated of all, and hating; with what ease
Indu'd with Regal Vertues as thou art,
Appearing and beginning noble deeds,
100 Might'st thou expel this monster from his Throne
Now made a stye, and in his place ascending
A victor, people free from servile yoke?
And with my help thou may'st; to me the power
Is given, and by that right I give it thee.
Aim therefore at no less than all the world,
Aim at the highest, without the highest attain'd
Will be for thee no sitting, or not long
On *David's* Throne, he prophes'd what will.
To whom the Son of God unmov'd reply'd.
110 Nor doth this grandeur and majestic show
Of luxury, though call'd magnificence,
More than of Arms before, allure mine eye,
Much less my mind; though thou shouldst add to tell
Thir sumptuous gluttonies, and gorgeous feasts
On *Citron* tables or *Atlantic* stone;
(For I have also heard, perhaps have read)
Their wines of *Setia*, *Cales*, and *Falerne*,
Chios and *Creet*, and how they quaff in Gold,
Crystal and Myrrhine cups imboss'd with Gems
120 And studs of Pearl, to me should'st tell who thirst

Paradise Regain'd. 55

And hunger still: then Embassies thou shew'st
From Nations far and nigh; what honour that,
But tedious wast of time to sit and hear
So many hollow complements and lies,
Outlandish flatteries? then proceed'st to talk
Of the Emperour, how easily subdu'd,
How gloriously; I shall, thou say'st, expell
A brutish monster: what if I withall
Expell a Devil who first made him such?
130 Let his tormenter Conscience find him out,
For him I was not sent, nor yet to free
That People victor once, now vile and base,
Deservedly made vassal, who once just,
Frugal, and mild, and temperate, conquer'd well,
But govern ill the Nations under yoke,
Peeling their Provinces, exhausted all
By lust and rapine; first ambitious grown
Of triumph that insulting vanity;
Then cruel, by thir sports to blood enur'd
140 Of fighting beasts, and men to beasts expos'd,
Luxurious by their wealth, and greedier still,
And from the daily Scene effeminate.
What wise and valiant Man would seek to free
These thus degenerate, by themselves enslav'd,
Or could of inward slaves make outward free?
Know therefore when my season comes to sit
On *David's* Throne, it shall be like a tree,
Spreading and overshadowing all the Earth,
Or as a stone that shall to pieces dash
150 All Monarchies besides throughout the World,
And of my Kingdom there shall be no end:
Means there shall be to this, but what the means,
Is not for thee to know, nor me to tell.

To whom the Tempter impudent repli'd,
 I see all offers made by me how slight
 Thou valu'st, because offer'd, and reject'st:
 Nothing will please the difficult and nice,
 Or nothing more than still to contradict;
 On the other side know also thou, that I
 160 On what I offer set as high esteem,
 Nor what I part with mean to give for naught;
 All these which in a moment thou behold'st,
 The Kingdoms of the World to thee I give;
 For giv'n to me, I give to whom I please,
 No trifle; yet with this reserve, not else,
 On this condition, if thou wilt fall down,
 And worship me as thy superior Lord,
 Easily done, and hold them all of me;
 For what can less so great a gift deserve?
 170 Whom thus our Saviour answer'd with disdain.
 I never lik'd thy talk, thy offers less,
 Now both abhor, since thou hast dar'd to utter
 The abominable terms, impious condition;
 But I endure the time, till which expir'd,
 Thou hast permission on me. It is written
 The first of all Commandments, Thou shalt worship
 The Lord thy God, and only him shalt serve;
 And dar'st thou to the Son of God propound
 To worship thee accurst, now more accurst
 180 For this attempt bolder than that on *Eve*,
 And more blasphemous? which expect to rue.
 The Kingdoms of the World to thee were giv'n,
 Permitted rather, and by thee usurp'd,
 Other donation none thou canst produce:
 If given, by whom but by the King of Kings,
 God over all Supreme? if giv'n to thee,

By thee how fairly is the Giver now
 Repaid? But gratitude in thee is lost
 Long since. Wert thou so void of fear or shame,
 190 As offer them to me the Son of God,
 To me my own, on such abhorred pact,
 That I fall down and worship thee as God?
 Get thee behind me; plain thou now appear'st
 That Evil one, Satan for ever damn'd.
 To whom the Fiend with fear abasht repli'd.
 Be not so sore offended, Son of God;
 Though Sons of God both Angels are and Men,
 If I to try whether in higher sort
 Than these thou bear'st that title, have propos'd
 200 What both from men and Angels I receive,
 Tetrachs of fire, air, flood, and on the earth
 Nations besides from all the quarter'd winds,
 God of this world invok't and world beneath;
 Who then thou art, whose coming is foretold
 To me so fatal, me it most concerns.
 The tryal hath indamag'd thee no way,
 Rather more honour left and more esteem;
 Me naught advantag'd, missing what I aim'd.
 Therefore let pass, as they are transitory,
 The Kingdoms of this world; I shall no more
 Advise thee, gain them as thou canst, or not.
 210 And thou thy self seem'st otherwise inclin'd
 Thence to a worldly Crown, addicted more
 To contemplation and profound dispute,
 As by that early action may be judg'd,
 When slipping from thy Mothers eye thou went'st
 Alone into the Temple; there was found
 Among the gravest Rabbies disputant
 On points and questions sitting *Moses* Chair,

Teaching not taught; the childhood shews the man,
 As morning shews the day. Be famous then
 By wisdom; as thy Empire must extend,
 220 So let extend thy mind o'er all the world,
 In knowledge, all things in it comprehend,
 All knowledge is not couch'd in *Moses* Law,
 The *Pentateuch* or what the Prophets wrote,
 The *Gentiles* also know, and write, and teach
 To admiration, led by Nature's light;
 And with the *Gentiles* much thou must converse,
 Ruling them by persuasion as thou mean'st,
 Without thir learning how wilt thou with them,
 Or they with thee hold conversation meet?
 230 How wilt thou reason with them, how refute
 Thir Idolisms, Traditions, Paradoxes?
 Error by his own arms is best evinc'd.
 Look once more ere we leave this specular Mount
 Westward, much nearer by Southwest, behold
 Whereon the *Aegean* shore a City stands
 Built nobly, pure the air, and light the soil,
Athens the eye of *Greece*, Mother of Arts
 And Eloquence, native to famous wits
 Or hospitable, in her sweet recess,
 240 City or Suburban, studious walks and shades;
 See there the Olive Grove of *Academe*,
Plato's retirement, where the *Atrio* Bird
 Trills her thick-warbl'd notes the summer long,
 There flow'ry hill *Hymettus* with the sound
 Of Bees industrious murmur oft invites
 To studious musing; there *Ilissus* rolls
 His whispering stream; within the walls then view
 The Schools of ancient Sages; his who bred
 Great *Alexander* to subdue the world,

250 *Lyceum* there, and painted *Stoa* next:
 There thou shalt hear and learn the secret power
 Of harmony in tones and numbers hit
 By voice or hand, and various-measur'd verse,
Aolian charms and *Dorian Lyric* Odes,
 And his who gave them breath, but higher sung,
 Blind *Melesigenes* thence *Homer* call'd,
 Whose Poem *Phobus* challeng'd for his own.
 Thence what the lofty grave *Tragicians* taught
 In *Chorus* or *Iambic*, teachers best
 260 Of moral prudence, with delight receiv'd
 In brief sententious precepts while they treat
 Of fate, and chance, and change in human life;
 High actions, and high passions best describing:
 Thence to the famous *Orators* repair,
 Those ancient, whose resistless eloquence
 Wielded at will that fierce *Democritus*,
 Shook the Arsenal and fulmin'd over *Greece*,
 To *Macedon*, and *Artaxerxes* Throne;
 To sage *Philosophy* next lend thine ear,
 270 From Heaven descended to the low-roof'd house
 Of *Socrates*, see there his Tenement,
 Whom well inspir'd the Oracle pronounc'd
 Wisest of men; from whose mouth issu'd forth
 Mellifluous streams that water'd all the Schools
 Of *Academics* old and new, with those
Sirnam'd Peripatetics, and the *Sect*
Epicurean, and the *Stoic* severe;
 These here revolve, or, as thou lik'st, at home,
 Till time mature thee to a Kingdom's waight;
 280 These rules will render thee a King compleat
 Within thy self, much more with Empire join'd.
 To whom our Saviour sagely thus repli'd.

60 *Paradise Regain'd.*

Think not but that I know these things, or think
I know them not; not therefore am I short
Of knowing what I aught: he who receives
Light from above, from the fountain of light,
No other doctrine needs, though granted true;
But these are false, or little else but dreams,
Conjectures, fancies, built on nothing firm.
290 The first and wisest of them all profess'd
To know this only, that he nothing knew;
The next to fabling fell and smooth conceits,
A third sort doubted all things, though plain sence;
Others in vertue plac'd felicity,
But vertue joyn'd with riches and long life,
In corporal pleasure he, and careless ease,
The Stoic last in Philosophic pride,
By him call'd vertue; and his vertuous man,
Wise, perfect in himself, and all possessing
300 Equal to God, oft shames not to prefer,
As fearing God nor man, contemning all
Wealth, pleasure, pain or torment, death and life,
Which when he lists, he leaves, or boasts he can,
For all his tedious talk is but vain boast,
Or subtle shifts conviction to evade.
Alas what can they teach, and not mislead;
Ignorant of themselves, of God much more,
And how the world began, and how man fell
Degraded by himself, on grace depending?
310 Much of the Soul they talk, but all awrie,
And in themselves seek vertue, and to themselves
All glory arrogate, to God give none,
Rather accuse him under usual names,
Fortune and Fate, as one regardless quite
Of mortal things. Who therefore seeks in these

True

Paradise Regain'd. 61

True wisdom, finds her not, or by delusion
Far worse, her false resemblance only meets,
An empty cloud. However many books
Wise men have said are wearisome; who reads
320 Incessantly, and to his reading brings not
A spirit and judgment equal or superior,
(And what he brings, what needs he elsewhere seek)
Uncertain and unsettl'd still remains,
Deep vers'd in books and shallow in himself,
Crude or intoxicate, collecting toys,
And trifles for choice matters, worth a sponge;
As Children gathering pebbles on the shore.
Or if I would delight my private hours
With Music or with Poem, where so soon
330 As in our native Language can I find
That solace? All our Law and Story strew'd
With Hymns, our Psalms with artfull terms inscrib'd,
Our Hebrew Songs and Harps in *Babylon*,
That pleas'd so well our Victors ear, declare
That rather *Greece* from us these Arts deriv'd;
Ill imitated, while they loudest sing
The vices of thir Dieties, and thir own
In Fable, Hymn, or Song, so personating
Thir Gods ridiculous, and themselves past shame.
340 Remove their swelling Epithetes thick laid
As varnish on a Harlots cheek, the rest,
Thin sown with aught of profit or delight,
Will far be found unworthy to compare
With *Sion's* songs, to all true tastes excelling,
Where God is prais'd aright, and God-like men,
The Holiest of Holies, and his Saints;
Such are from God inspir'd, not such from the
Unless where moral vertue is express'd

By

By light of Nature not in all quite lost.
 340 Thir Orators thou then extoll'st, as those
 The top of Eloquence, Statists indeed,
 And lovers of thir Country, as may seem;
 But herein to our Prophets far beneath,
 As men divinely taught, and better teaching
 The solid rules of Civil Government
 In thir Majestic unaffected stile
 Then all the Oratory of *Greece* and *Rome*.
 In them is plainest taught, and easiest learnt,
 What makes a Nation happy, and keeps it so,
 360 What ruins Kingdoms, and lays Cities flat;
 These only with our Law best form a King.
 So spake the Son of God; but Satan now
 Quite at a loss, for all his darts were spent,
 Thus to our Saviour with stern brow repli'd.
 Since neither wealth, nor honour, arms nor arts,
 Kingdom nor Empire pleases thee, nor aught
 By me propos'd in life contemplative,
 Or active, tended on by glory, or fame,
 What dost thou in this World? the Wilderness
 370 For thee is fittest place, I found thee there,
 And thither will return thee, yet remember
 What I foretell thee, soon thou shalt have cause
 To wish thou never hadst rejected thus
 Nicely or cautiously my offer'd aid,
 Which would have set thee in short time with ease
 On *David's* Throne; or Throne of all the world,
 Now at full age, fulness of time, thy season,
 When Prophecies of thee are best fulfill'd.
 Now contrary, if I read aught in Heaven,
 380 Or Heav'n write aught of Fate, by what the Stars
 Voluminous, or single Characters,

In their conjunction met, give me to spell,
 Sorrows, and labours opposition, hate,
 Attends thee, scorns, reproaches, injuries,
 Violence and stripes, and lastly cruel death,
 A Kingdom they portend thee, but what Kingdom,
 Real or Allegoric I discern not,
 Nor when, eternal sure, as without end,
 Without beginning; for no date prefat.
 390 Directs me in the Starry Rubric set.
 So saying he took (for still he knew his power
 Not yet expir'd) and to the Wilderness
 Brought back the Son of God, and left him there,
 Feigning to disappear. Darkness now rose,
 As day-light sunk, and brought in lowring night
 Her shadowy off-spring unsubstantial both,
 Privation meer of light and absent day.
 Our Saviour meek and with untroubld mind
 After his aery jaunt, though hurried sore,
 400 Hungry and cold betook him to his rest,
 Wherever, under some concourse of shades
 Whose branching arms thick interwind might shield
 From dews and damps of night his shelter'd head,
 But shelter'd slept in vain, for at his head
 The Tempter watch'd, and soon with ugly dreams
 Disturb'd his sleep; and either Tropic now
 'Gan thunder, and both ends of Heav'n the Clouds
 From many a horrid rift abortive pour'd
 Fierce rain with lightning mixt, water with fire
 410 In ruine reconcil'd: nor slept the winds
 Within thir stony caves, but rush'd abroad
 From the four hinges of the world, and fell
 On the vex'd Wilderness, whose tallest Pines,
 Though rooted deep as high, and sturdiest Oaks

Bow'd their Stiff necks, loaden with stormy blasts,
 Or torn up sheer: ill wast thou shrouded then,
 O patient Son of God, yet only stoodst
 Unshaken; nor yet staid the terror there,
 Infernal Ghosts, and Hellish Furies, round
 320 Environ'd thee, some howl'd, some yell'd, some shriek'd,
 Some bent at thee thir fiery darts, while thou
 Sat'st unappall'd in calm and sinless peace.
 Thus pass'd the night so foul till morning fair
 Came forth with Pilgrim steps in amice gray;
 Who with her radiant finger still'd the roar
 Of thunder, chas'd the clouds, and laid the winds,
 And grisly Spectres, which the Fiend had rais'd
 To tempt the Son of God with terrors dire.
 And now the Sun with more effectual beams
 330 Had chear'd the face of Earth, and dri'd the wet
 From drooping plant, or dropping tree; the birds
 Who all things now behold more fresh and green,
 After a night of storm so ruinous,
 Clear'd up their choicest notes in bush and spray
 To gratulate the sweet return of morn;
 Nor yet amidst this joy and brightest morn
 Was absent, after all his mischief done,
 The Prince of darkness, glad would also seem
 Of this fair change, and to our Saviour came,
 340 Yet with no new device, they all were spent,
 Rather by this his last affront resolv'd,
 Desperate of better course, to vent his rage,
 And mad despight to be so oft repell'd.
 Him walking on a Sunny hill he found,
 Back'd on the North and West by a thick wood,
 Out of the wood he starts in wonted shape;
 And in a careless mood thus to him said.

Fair morning yet betides thee Son of God,
 After a dismal night; I heard the rack
 450 As Earth and Sky would mingle; but my self
 Was distant; and these flaws, though mortals fear them
 As dangerous to the pillard frame of Heaven,
 Or to the Earths dark basis underneath,
 Are to the main as inconsiderable,
 And harmless, if not wholsom, as a sneeze
 To mans less universe, and soon are gone;
 Yet as being oft times noxious where they light
 On man, beast, plant, wastfull and turbulent,
 Like turbulencies in the affairs of men,
 460 Over whose heads they rore, and seem to point,
 They oft fore-signifie and threaten ill:
 This Tempest at this Desert most was bent;
 Of men at thee, for only thou here dwell'st.
 Did I not tell thee, if thou didst reject
 The perfect season offer'd with my aid
 To win thy destin'd seat, but wilt prolong
 All to the push of Fate, persue thy way
 Of gaining *Dauids* Throne no man knows when,
 For both the when and how is no where told,
 470 Thou shalt be what thou art ordain'd, no doubt;
 For Angels have proclaim'd it, but concealing
 The time and means: each act is rightliest done,
 Not when it must, but when it may be best.
 If thou observe not this, be sure to find,
 What I foretold thee, many a hard assay
 Of dangers, and adversities and pains,
 Ere thou of *Israels* Scepter get fast hold;
 Whereof this ominous night that clos'd thee round,
 So many terrors, voices, prodigies
 May warn thee, as a sure fore-going sign.

So talk'd he, while the Son of God went on
And staid not, but in brief him answer'd thus.

Me worse than wet thou find'st not; other harm
Those terrors which thou speak'st of, did me none;
I never fear'd they could, though noising loud
And threatening nigh; what they can do as signs
Betok'ning, or ill boding, I contemn
As false portents, not sent from God, but thee;
Who knowing I shall reign past thy preventing,
Obtrud'st thy offer'd aid, that I accepting
At least might seem to hold all power of thee,
Ambitious spirit, and wouldst be thought my God
And storm'st refus'd, thinking to terrifie
Me to thy will; desist, thou art discern'd
And toil'st in vain, nor me in vain molest.

To whom the Fiend now swoln with rage reply'd:
Then hear, O Son of *David*, Virgin-born;
For Son of God to me is yet in doubt,
Of the Messiah I have heard foretold
By all the Prophets; of thy birth at length
Announc'd by *Gabriel* with the first I knew,
And of the Angelic Song in *Bethlehem* field,
On thy birth-night, that sung thee Saviour born.
From that time seldom have I ceas'd to eye
Thy infancy, thy childhood, and thy youth,
Thy manhood last, though yet in private bred;
Till at the Ford of *Jordan* whether all
Flock'd to the Baptist, I among the rest,
Though not to be Baptiz'd, by voice from Heav'n
Heard thee pronounc'd the Son of God belov'd.
Thenceforth I thought thee worth my nearer view
And narrower Scrutiny, that I might learn
In what degree or meaning thou art call'd

The Son of God, which bears no single sense;
The Son of God I also am, or was,
And if I was, I am; relation stands;
All men are Sons of God; yet thee I thought
In some respect far higher so declar'd.
Therefore I watch'd thy footsteps from that hour,
And follow'd thee still on to this wast wild;
Where by all best conjectures I collect
Thou art to be my fatal enemy.
Good reason then, if I before-hand seek
To understand my Adversary, who
And what he is; his wisdom, power, intent,
By parl, or composition, truce, or league
To win him, or win from him what I can.
And opportunity I here have had
To try thee, sift thee, and confess have found thee
Proof against all temptation as a rock
Of Adamant, and as a Center, firm
To the utmost of meer man both wise and good,
Not more; for Honours, Riches, Kingdoms, Glory
Have been before contemn'd, and may agen:
Therefore to know what more thou art than man,
Worth naming Son of God by voice from Heav'n,
Another method I must now begin.

So saying he caught him up, and without wing
Of *Hippogrif* bore through the Air sublime
Over the Wilderness and o're the Plain;
Till underneath them fair *Jerusalem*,
The holy City lifted high her Towers,
And higher yet the glorious Temple rear'd
Her pile, far off appearing like a Mount
Of Alabaster, top't with Golden Spires:
There on the highest Pinnacle he set

68 *Paradise Regain'd.*

The Son of God ; and added thus in scorn :

There stand, if thou wilt stand ; to stand upright
Will ask thee skill ; I to thy Fathers house
Have brought thee, and highest plac'd, highest is best,
Now shew thy Progeny ; if not to stand,
Cast thy self down ; safely if Son of God :
For it is written, He will give command
Concerning thee to his Angels, in thir hands
They shall up lift thee, lest at any time
Thou chance to dash thy foot against a stone.

To whom thus Jesus : also it is written,
Tempt not the Lord thy God, he said and stood.
But Satan smitten with amazement fell

As when Earths Son *Antæus* (to compare
Small things with greatest) in *Irassa* strove
With *Joves Alcides*, and oft foil'd still rose,
Receiving from his mother Earth new strength,
Fresh from his fall, and fiercer grapple joyn'd,
Throttled at length in the Air, expir'd and fell ;
So after many a foil the Tempter proud,
Renewing fresh assaults, amidst his pride
Fell whence he stood to see his Victor fall.

And as that *Theban* Monster that propos'd
Her riddle, and him, who solv'd it not, devour'd ;
That once found out and solv'd, for grief and spight
Cast her self headlong from th' *Ismenian* steep,
So strook with dread and anguish fell the Fiend,
And to his crew, thar sat consulting, brought
Joyless triumphals of his hop't success,
Ruin, and desperation, and dismay,
Who durst so proudly tempt the Son of God.
So Satan fell and strait a fiery Globe
Of Angels on full sail of wing flew nigh,

Paradise Regain'd.

69

Who on their plummy Vans receiv'd him soft
From his uneasy station, and upbore
As on a floating couch through the blithe Air,
Then in a flowry valley set him down
On a green bank, and set before him spread
A table of Celestial Food, Divine,
Ambrosial, fruits fetcht from the Tree of Life,
And from the fount of Life Ambrosial drink,
That soon refresh'd him wearied, and repair'd
What hunger, if aught hunger had impair'd,
Or thirst, and as he fed, Angelic Quires
Sung Heavenly Anthems of his victory
Over temptation, and the Tempter proud.

True Image of the Father whether thron'd
In the bosom of bliss, and light of light
Conceiving, or remote from Heaven, enshrin'd
In fleshly Tabernacle, and human form,
Wandering the Wilderness, whatever place,
Habit, or state, or motion, still expressing
The Son of God, with Godlike force indu'd
Against th' Attempter of thy Fathers Throne,
And Thief of Paradise ; him long of old
Thou didst debel, and down from Heav'n cast
With all his Army, now thou hast aveng'd
Supplanted *Adam*, and by vanquishing
Temptation, hast regain'd lost Paradise,
And frustrated the conquest fraudulent :
He never more henceforth will dare set foot
In Paradise to tempt ; his snares are broke :
For though that seat of earthly bliss be fail'd,
A fairer Paradise is founded now
For *Adam* and his chosen Sons, whom thou
A Saviour art come down to re-install.

70 *Paradise Regain'd.*

Where they shall dwell secure, when time shall be
Of Tempter and temptation without fear.
But thou, Infernal Serpent, shalt not long
Rule in the Clouds; like an Autumnal Star
Or Lightning thou shalt fall from Heav'n trod down
Under his feet: for proof, e're this thou feel'st
Thy wound, yet not thy last and deadliest wound
By this repulse receiv'd, and hold'st in Hell
No triumph; in all her Gates *Abaddon* rues
Thy bold attempt; hereafter learn with awe
To dread the Son of God: he all unarm'd
Shall chase thee with the terror of his voice
From thy Demoniack holds, possession foul,
Thee and thy Legions, yelling they shall flee,
And beg to hide them in a herd of Swine,
Left he command them down into the deep
Bound, and to torment sent before thir time.
Hail Son of the most High, heir of both Worlds,
Queller of Satan, on thy glorious work
Now enter, and begin to save mankind.

Thus they the Son of God our Saviour meek
Sung Victor, and from Heavenly Feast refresh'd
Brought on his way with joy; he unobserv'd
Home to his Mothers house private return'd.

The END.

SAMSON AGONISTES,

A

DRAMATIC POEM.

The Author

JOHN MILTON.

Aristot. Poet. Cap. 6.

Tragœdia plurimum ædificans animas, &c.

*Tragœdia est imitatio actionis serie, &c. Per misericordiam
& metum perficiens talium affectuum lustrationem.*

L O N D O N,

Printed for John Starkey at the Mitre
in Fleet-street, near Temple-Bar.
MDCLXXX.



*Of that sort of Dramatic Poem which
is call'd Tragedy.*

TRagedy, as it was anciently compos'd hath been ever held the graveſt, moraleſt, and moſt profitable of all other Poems: therefore ſaid by *Aristotle* to be of power by raiſing pity and fear, or terror, to purge the mind of thoſe and ſuch like paſſions, that is, to temper and reduce them to juſt meaſure with a kind of delight, ſtirr'd up by reading or ſeeing thoſe paſſions well imitated. Nor is Nature wanting in her own effects to make good his aſſertion: for ſo in Phyſic things of melancolic hue and quality are us'd againſt melancholy, ſowr againſt ſowr, ſalt to remove ſalt humours. Hence Philoſophers and other graveſt Writers, as *Cicero*, *Plutarch* and others, frequently cite out of Tragic Poets, both to adorn and illuſtrate their diſcourſe. The Apoſtle *Paul* himſelf thought it not unworthy to inſert a verſe of *Euripides* into the Text of Holy Scripture, *1 Cor. 15. 33.* and *Paræus* commenting on the *Revelation*, divides the whole Book as a Tragedy, into Acts diſtinguiſht each by a Chorus of Heavenly Harpings and Song between. Hereto-
fore

fore Men in highest dignity have labour'd not a little to be thought able to compose a Tragedy. Of that honour *Dionysius* the elder was no less ambitious, than before of his attaining to the Tyranny. *Augustus Cæsar* also had begun his *Ajax*, but unable to please his own judgment with what he had begun, left it unfinished. *Seneca* the Philosopher is by some thought the Author of those Tragedies (at least the best of them) that go under that name. *Gregory, Nazianzen* a Father of the Church, thought it not unbeseeming the sanctity of his person to write a Tragedy, which he entitl'd, *Christ suffering*. This is mention'd to vindicate Tragedy from the small esteem, or rather infamy, which in the account of many it undergoes at this day with other common Interludes; hap'ning through the Poets error of intermixing Comic stuff with Tragic sadness and gravity; or introducing trivial and vulgar persons which by all judicious hath been counted absurd and brought in without discretion, corruptly to gratify the people. And though ancient Tragedy us'd no Prologue, yet using sometimes, in case of self defence, or explanation, that which *Martial* calls an Epistle; in behalf of this Tragedy coming forth after the ancient manner, much different from what among us passes for best, thus much before-hand may be Epistl'd; that *Chorus* is here introduc'd after the Greek manner, not ancient only but modern and still in use among the *Italians*. In the modelling

therefore of this Poem, with good reason, the Ancients and *Italians* are rather follow'd, as of much more Authority and fame. The measure of Verse us'd in the Chorus is of all sorts, call'd by the Greeks *Monostrophic*, or rather *Apolelymenon*, without regard had to *Strophe*, *Antistrophe* or *Epod*, which were a kind of Stanza's fram'd only for the Music, then us'd with the Chorus that sung; not essential to the Poem, and therefore not material; or being divided into Stanza's or Pauses, they may be call'd *Allæostropha*. Division into Act and Scene referring chiefly to the Stage (to which this work never was intended) is here omitted.

It suffices if the whole Drama be found not produc't beyond the fifth Act, of the stile and uniformity, and that commonly call'd the Plot, whether intricate or explicit, which is nothing indeed but such œconomy, or disposition of the fable as may stand best with verisimilitude and decorum; they only will best judge who are not unacquainted with *Æschulus*, *Sophocles*, and *Euripides*, the three Tragic Poets unequall'd yet by any, and the best rule to all who endeavour to write Tragedy. The circumscription of time wherein the whole Drama begins and ends, is according to ancient rule, and best example, within the space of 24 hours.

10

The ARGUMENT.

Samson made Captive, Blind, and now in the Prison at Gaza, there to labour as in a common work-house, on a Festival day, in the general cessation from labour, comes forth into the open Air, to a place nigh, somewhat retir'd there to sit a while and bemoan his condition. Where he happens at length to be visited by certain friends and equals of his tribe, which make the Chorus, who seek to comfort him what they can; then by his old Father Manoa, who endeavours the like, and withall tells him his purpose to procure his liberty by ransom; lastly, that this Feast was proclaim'd by the Philistines as a day of Thanksgiving for their deliverance from the hands of Samson, which yet more troubles him. Manoa then departs to prosecute his indeavour with the Philistian Lords for Samson's redemption; who in the mean while is visited by other persons; and lastly by a publick Officer to require his coming to the Feast before the Lords and People, to play or shew his strength in their presence; he at first refuses, dismissing the publick Officer with absolute denial to come; at length persuaded inwardly that this was from God, he yields to go along with him, who come now the second time with great threatnings to fetch him; the Chorus yet remaining on the place, Manoa returns full of joyfull hope, to procure ere long his Sons deliverance: in the midst of which discourse an Hebrew comes in haste confusedly at first; and afterward more distinctly relating the Catastrophe, what Samson had done to the Philistines, and by accident to himself; where with the Tragedy ends.

The



The Persons.

Samson.

Manoa *the Father of Samson.*

Dalila *his Wife.*

Harapha *of Gath.*

Publick Officer.

Messenger.

Chorus *of Danites.*

The Scene before the Prison in Gaza.

Samson



SAMSON

AGONISTES.

Samf. **A** Little onward lend thy guiding hand
 To these dark steps, a little further on;
 For yonder bank hath choice of Sun or shade,
 There I am wont to sit, when any chance
 Relieves me from my task of servile toyl,
 Daily in the common Prison else enjoyn'd me,
 Where I a Prisoner chain'd, scarce freely draw
 The air imprison'd also, close and damp,
 Unwholsom draught: but here I feel amends,
 10 The breath of Heav'n fresh-blowing, pure and sweet,
 With day-spring born; here leave me to respire.
 This day a solemn Feast the people hold
 To Dagon their Sea-Idol, and forbid
 Laborious works, unwillingly this rest
 Their Superstition yields me; hence with leave
 Retiring from the popular noise, I seek
 This unfrequented place to find some ease,
 Ease to the body some, none to the mind
 From restless thoughts, that like a deadly swarm
 11 Of Hornets arm'd, no sooner found alone,
 But rush upon me thronging, and pursue

Times past, what once I was, and what am now.
 O wherefore was my birth from Heaven foretold
 Twice by an Angel, who at last in sight
 Of both my Parents all in flames ascended
 From off the Altar, where an Off'ring burn'd,
 As in a fiery column charioting
 His Godlike presence, and from some great act
 Or benefit reveal'd to *Abraham's* race?
 30 Why was my breeding order'd and prescrib'd
 As of a person separate to God,
 Design'd for great exploits; if I must die
 Betray'd, Captiv'd, and both my Eyes put out,
 Made of my Enemies the scorn and gaze;
 To grind in Brazen Fetters under task
 With this Heav'n-gifted strength? O glorious strength
 Put to the labour of a Beast, debas'd
 Lower than bondslave! Promise was that I
 Should *Israel* from *Philistian* yoke deliver;
 40 Ask for this great Deliverer now, and find him
 Eyeless in *Gaza* at the Mill with slaves,
 Himself in bonds under *Philistian* yoke;
 Yet stay, let me not rashly call in doubt
 Divine Prediction; what if all foretold
 Had been fulfill'd but through mine own default,
 Whom have I to complain of but my self?
 Who this high gift of strength committed to me,
 In what part lodg'd, how easily bereft me,
 Under the Seal of silence could not keep,
 50 But weakly to a woman must reveal it,
 O'come with importunity and tears.
 O impotence of mind, in body strong!
 But what is strength without a double share
 Of wisdom, vast, unwieldy, burdensom,

Proudly

Proudly secure, yet liable to fall
 By weakest subtleties, not made to rule,
 But to subserve where wisdom bears command.
 God, when he gave me strength, to shew withal
 How slight the gift was, hung it in my Hair.
 60 But Peace, I must not quarrel with the will
 Of highest dispensation, which herein
 Happ'ly had ends above my reach to know:
 Suffices that to me strength is my bane,
 And proves the source of all my miseries;
 So many, and so huge, that each apart
 Would ask a life to wail, but chief of all,
 O loss of sight, of thee I most complain!
 Blind among enemies, O worse than chains,
 70 Dungeon, or beggery, decrepit age!
 Light the prime work of God to me is extinct,
 And all her various objects of delight
 Annul'd, which might in part my grief have eas'd,
 Inferiour to the vilest now become
 Of man or worm; the vilest here excel me,
 They creep, yet see, I dark in light expos'd
 To daily fraud, contempt, abuse and wrong,
 Within doors, or without, still as a fool,
 In power of others, never in my own;
 80 Scarce half I seem to live, dead more than half.
 O dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon,
 Irrecoverably dark, total Eclipse
 Without all hope of day!
 O first created Beam, and thou great Word,
 Let there be light, and light was over all;
 Why am I thus bereav'd thy prime decree?
 The Sun to me is dark
 And silent as the Moon,

F

When

When she deserts the night
 90 Hid in her vacant interlunar cave.
 Since light so necessary is to life,
 And almost life it self, if it be true
 That light is in the Soul,
 She all in every part; why was the sight
 To such a tender ball as th' eye confin'd?
 So obvious and so easie to be quench'd,
 And not as feeling through all parts diffus'd,
 That she might look at will through every pore?
 Then had I not been thus exil'd from light;
 100 As in the land of darkness yet in light,
 To live a life half dead, a living death,
 And buried; but O yet more miserable?
 My self, my Sepulcher, a moving Grave,
 Buried, yet not exempt
 By privilege of death and burial
 From worst of other evils, pains and wrongs,
 But made hereby obnoxious more
 To all the miseries of life,
 Life in captivity
 110 Among inhuman foes.
 But who are these? for with joint pace I hear
 The tread of many feet steering this way;
 Perhaps my enemies who come to stare
 At my affliction, and perhaps to insult,
 Their daily practice to afflict me more.
Chor. This, this is he; softly a while,
 Let us not break in upon him;
 O change beyond report, thought, or belief!
 See how he lies at random, carelessly diffus'd,
 120 With languish'd head unpropt,
 As one past hope, abandon'd,

And by himself given over;
 In slavish habit, ill-fitted weeds
 O're worn and solid;
 Or do my eyes misrepresent? Can this be he,
 That Heroic, that Renown'd,
 Irresistable *Samson*? whom unarm'd (withstand;
 No strength of man, or fiercest wild beast could
 Who tore the Lion, as the Lion tears the Kid,
 130 Ran on embattel'd Armies clad in Iron,
 And weaponless himself,
 Made Arms ridiculous, useless the forgery
 Of brazen Shield and Spear, the hammer'd Cuirass,
Chalybean temper'd steel, and frock of mail
 Adamantean Proof;
 But safest he who stood aloof,
 When insupportably his foot advanc'd,
 In scorn of their proud arms and warlike tools,
 Spurn'd them to death by Troops. The bold *Asca-*
 140 Fled from his Lion ramp, old Warriors turn'd (*lanite*
 Their plated backs under his heel;
 Or grov'ling foil'd their crested helmets in the dust.
 Then with what trivial weapon came to hand,
 The Jaw of a dead Ass, his sword of bone,
 A thousand fore-skins fell, the flower of *Palestine*
 In *Ramath-lechi* famous to this day:
 Then by main force pull'd up, and on his shoulders
 The Gates of *Arza*, Post, and massive Bar (bore
 Up to the Hill by *Hebron*, seat of Giants old,
 150 No journey of a Sabbath-day, and loaded so;
 Like whom the Gentiles feign to bear up Heav'n.
 Which shall I first bewail,
 Thy Bondage or lost Sight,
 Prison within Prison

Inseparably dark?

Thou art become (O worst imprisonment!)

The Dungeon of thy self; thy Soul

(Which Men enjoying light oft without cause com-
Imprison'd now indeed, (plain

160 In real darkness of the body dwells,

Shut up from outward light

To incorporate with gloomy night;

For inward light alas

Puts forth no visual beam.

O mirror of our fickle state,

Since man on earth unparallel'd?

The rarer thy example stands,

By how much from the top of wondrous glory,

Strongest of mortal men,

170 To lowest pitch of abject fortune thou art fall'n

For him I reckon not in high estate

Whom long descent of birth

Or the spear of fortune raises;

But thee whose strength, while virtue was her mate

Might have subdu'd the Earth,

Universally crown'd with highest praises.

Sam. I hear the sound of words, their sense the
Dissolves unjointed ere it reach my ear. (migh

Chor. He speak, let us draw nigh. Matchless

180 The glory late of Israel, now the grief,

We come thy friends and neighbours not unknown

From *Eshtaul* and *Zorah's* fruitful Vale

To visit or bewail thee, or if better,

Counsel or Consolation we may bring,

Salve to thy Sores, apt words have power to swi

The rumors of a troubl'd mind,

And are as Balm to fester'd wounds.

Sam. Your coming, Friends, revives me, for I learn
Now of my own experience, not by talk,

190 How counterfeit a coin they are who friends

Bear in their Supercription (of the most

I would be understood) in prosperous days

They swarm, but in adverse withdraw their head

Not to be found, though sought. Ye see, O friends,

How many evils have enclos'd me round;

Yet that which was the worst now least afflicts me,

Blindness, for had I sight, confus'd with shame,

How could I once look up, or heave the head,

Who like a foolish Pilot have shipwreck'd,

200 My Vessel trusted to me from above,

Gloriously rigg'd; and for a word, a tear,

Fool, have divulg'd the secret gift of God

To a deceitful Woman: tell me Friends,

Am I not sung and proverb'd for a Fool

In every street, do they not say, how well

Are come upon him his deserts? yet why?

Immeasurable strength they might behold

In me, of wisdom nothing more than mean;

This with the other should, at least, have paid,

210 These two proportion'd ill drove me transverse.

Chor. Tax not divine disposal wisest Men

Have err'd, and by bad Women been deceived;

And shall again, pretend they ne're so wise.

Deject not then so overmuch thy self,

Who hast of sorrow thy full load besides;

Yet truth to say, I oft have heard men wonder

Why thou shouldst wed *Philistian* Woman rather

Than of thine own Tribe fairer, or as fair,

At least of thy own Nation, and as noble.

220 Sam. The first I saw at *Tirania*, and she pleas'd

86 *Samson Agonistes.*

Me, not my Parents, that I sought to wed,
The daughter of an Infidel: they knew not
That what I mention'd was of God; I knew
From intimate impulse, and therefore urg'd
The Marriage on; that by occasion hence
I might begin *Israel's* Deliverance,
The work to which I was divinely call'd;
She proving false, the next I took to Wife
(O that I never had! fond wish too late.)
230 Was in the Vale of *Sorec*, *Dalila*,
That specious Monster, my accomplisht snare.
I thought it lawfull from my former act,
And the same end; still watching to oppress
Israel's oppressours: of what now I suffer
She was not the prime cause, but I my self,
Who vanquish't with a peal of words (O weaknes!)
Gave up my fort of silence to a Woman.

Chor. In seeking just occasion to provoke
The *Philistine*, thy Countries Enemy,
240 Thou never wast remiss, I bear thee witness:
Yet *Israel* still serves with all his Sons.

Sam. That fault I take not on me, but transfer
On *Israel's* Governours, and Heads of Tribes,
Who seeing those great acts which God had done
Singly by me against their Conquerours
Acknowledg'd not, or not at all consider'd
Deliverance offer'd: I on the other side
Us'd no ambition to commend my deeds, (doer)
The deeds themselves, though mute, spoke loud
250 But they persisted deaf, and would not seem
To count them things worth notice, till at length
Their Lords the *Philistines* with gather'd powers
Enter'd *Judea* seeking me, who then

Samson Agonistes. 87

Safe to the rock of *Etham* was retir'd,
Not flying, but fore-casting in what place
To set upon them what advantag'd best;
Mean while the men of *Judab* to prevent
The harra's of their Land beset me round;
I willingly on some conditions came
260 Into their hands, and they as gladly yield me
To the uncircumcis'd a welcom prey,
Bound with two cords; but cords to me were threads
Tought with the flame: on their whole Host I saw
Unarm'd, and with a trivial weapon sell'd
Their choicest youth; they only liv'd who dead.
Had *Judab* that day join'd, or one whole Tribe,
They had by this possess'd the Towers of *Gath*,
And lorded over them whom now they serve;
But what more oft in Nations grown corrupt,
270 And by their vices brought to servitude,
Than to love Bondage more than Liberty,
Bondage with ease then strenuous liberty;
And to despise, or envy, or suspect
Whom God hath of his special favour rais'd
As their Deliverer; if he aught begin,
How frequent to desert him, and at last
To heap ingratitude on worthiest deeds?

Cho. Thy words to my remembrance bring
How *Succoth* and the Fort of *Pennel*
280 Their great Deliverer contemn'd,
The matchless *Gideon* in pursuit
Of *Madian* and her vanquish't Kings:
And how ingratul *Ephraim*
Had dealt with *Jephtha*, who by argument,
Not worse than by his shield and spear
Defended *Israel* from the *Ammonite*,

88 *Samson Agonistes.*

Had not his prowess quell'd their pride
In that sore battel when so many dy'd
Without Reprieve adjudg'd to death,
290 For want of well pronouncing *Shibboleth*.

Sam. Of such examples add me to the rowl,
Me easily indeed mine may neglect,
But Gods propos'd deliverance not so.

Chor. Just are the ways of God,
And justifiable to Men;
Unless there be who think not God at all,
If any be, they walk obscure;
For of such Doctrine never was there School,
But the heart of the Fool,

300 And no man therein Doctor but himself.

Yet more there be who doubt his ways not just,
As to his own edicts, found contradicting,
Then give the reins to wandring thought,
Regardless of his glories diminution;
Till by their own perplexities involv'd
They ravel more, still less resolv'd,

But never find self-satisfying solution.

As if they would confine th' interminable,
And tie him to his own prescript,
310 Who made our Laws to bind us, not himself,
And hath full right to exempt
Whom so it pleases him by choice
From National obstriction, without taint
Of sin, or legal debt;

For with his own Laws he can best dispence.

He would not else who never wanted means,
Nor in respect of the enemy just cause
To set his people free,
Have prompted this Heroic *Nazarite*,

Against

Samson Agonistes. 89

320 Against his vow of strictest purity,
To seek in marriage that fallacious Bride,
Unclean, unchaste.

Down Reason then, at least vain reasonings down,
Though Reason here aver
That moral verdict quits her of unclean:
Unchaste was subsequent, her stain not his.

But see here comes thy reverend Sire
With careful step, Locks white as downe,
Old *Manoah*: advise

330 Forthwith how thou oughtst to receive him.

Sam. Ay me, another inward grief awak't
With mention of that name renew'd assault.

Man. Brethren and men of *Dan*, for such ye seem,
Though in this unconth place; if old respect,
As I suppose, towards your once gloried friend,
My Son now Captive, hither hath inform'd
Your younger feet, while mine cast back with age
Came lagging after; say if he be here.

Chor. As signal now in low dejected state,
340 As erst in highest, behold him where he lies.

Man. O miserable change! is this the man,
That invincible *Samson*, far renown'd
The dread of *Israel's* foes, who with a strength
Equivalent to Angels walk'd their streets,
None offering fight; who single combatant
Duell'd their Armies rank't in proud array,
Himself an Army, now unequal match
To save himself against a coward arm'd
At one spears length. O ever failing trust
350 In mortal strength! and oh what not in man
Deceivable and vain! Nay what thing good
Pray'd for, but often proves our woe, our bane?

I pray'd

I pray'd for Children, and thought barrenness
 In wedlock a reproach ; I gain'd a Son,
 Such a Son as all men hail'd me happy ;
 Who would be now a Father in my stead ?
 O wherefore did God grant me my request,
 And as a blessing with such pomp adorn'd ?
 Why are his gifts desirable, to tempt
 350 Our earnest Prayers, then giv'n with solemn hand
 As Graces, draw a Scorpions tail behind ?
 For this did the Angel twice descend ? for this
 Ordain'd thy nurture holy, as of a Plant ;
 Select, and Sacred, Glorious for a while,
 The miracle of men : then in an hour
 Ensnar'd, assaulted, overcome, led bound,
 Thy Foes derision, Captive, Poor, and Blind
 Into a Dungeon thrust, to work with Slaves ?
 Alas methinks whom God hath chosen once
 370 To worthiest deeds, if he through frailty err,
 He should not so o'whelm, and as a thrall
 Subject him to so foul indignities,
 Be it but for honours sake of former deeds.

Sam. Appoint not heavenly disposition, Father,
 Nothing of all these evils hath befall'n me
 But justly ; I my self have brought them on,
 Sole Author I, sole cause : if aught seem vile,
 As vile hath been my folly, who have profan'd
 The mystery of God giv'n me under pledge
 380 Of vow, and have betray'd it to a woman,
 A *Canaanite*, my faithless enemy.
 This well I knew, nor was at all surpris'd,
 But warn'd by oft experience : did not she
 Of *Timna* first betray me, and reveal
 The secret wrested from me in her high

Of Nuptial love profess, carrying it strait
 To them who had corrupted her, my Spies,
 And Rivals ? In this other was there found
 More Faith ? who also in her prime of love,
 390 Spousal embraces, vitiated with Gold,
 Though offer'd only, by the sent conceiv'd
 Her spurious first-born ; Treason against me ?
 Thrice she assay'd with flattering prayers and sighs,
 And amorous reproaches to win from me
 My capital secret, in what part my strength
 Lay stor'd, in what part summ'd, that she might know :
 Thrice I deluded her, and turn'd to sport
 Her importunity, each time perceiving
 How openly, and with what impudence
 400 She purpos'd to betray me, and (which was worse
 Than undissembl'd hate) with what contempt
 She sought to make me Traytor to my self ;
 Yet the fourth time, when mustering all her wiles,
 With blandisht parlies, feminine assaults,
 Tongue-batteries, she surceas'd not day nor night
 To storm me over-watch'r, and wearied out.
 At times when men seek most repose and rest,
 I yielded, and unlock'd her all my heart,
 Who with a grain of manhood well resolv'd
 410 Might easily have shook off all her snares :
 But foul effeminacy held me yok't
 Her Bond-slave ; O indignity, O blot
 To Honour and Religion ! servil mind
 Rewarded well with servil punishment !
 The base degree to which I now am fall'n,
 These rags, this grinding, is not yet so base
 As was my former servitude, ignoble,
 Unmanly, ignominious, infamous,

True slavery, and that blindness worse than this,
 420 That saw not how degeneratly I serv'd.

Man. I cannot praise thy Marriage choises, Son,
 Rather approv'd them not; but thou didst plead
 Divine impulsion prompting how thou might'st
 Find some occasion to infect our Foes.
 I state not that; this I am sure our Foes
 Found soon occasion thereby to make thee
 Thir Captive, and thir triumph; thou the sooner
 Temptation found'st, or over-potent charms
 To violate the sacred trust of silence
 430 Deposited within thee; which to have kept
 Tacit, was in thy power; true; and thou bear'st
 Enough, and more the burden of that fault;
 Bitterly hast thou paid, and still art paying
 That rigid score. A worse thing yet remains,
 This day the *Philistines* a popular Feast
 Here celebrate in *Gaza*; and proclaim
 Great Pomp, and Sacrifice, and Praises loud
 To *Dagon*, as their God who hath deliver'd
 Thee *Samson* bound and blind into thir hands,
 440 Them out of thine, who slew'st them many a slain.
 So *Dagon* shall be magnifi'd, and God,
 Besides whom is no God, compar'd with Idols,
 Disglorifi'd, blasphem'd, and had in scorn
 By th' Idolatrous rout amidst their wine;
 Which to have come to pass by means of thee,
Samson, of all thy sufferings think the heaviest,
 Of all reproach the most with shame that ever
 Could have befall'n thee and thy Fathers house.
Sam. Father, I do acknowledge and confess
 450 That I this honour, I this pomp have brought
 To *Dagon*, and advanc'd his praises high

Among

Among the Heathen round; to God have brought
 Dishonour, obloquy, and op't the mouths
 Of Idolists, and Atheists; have brought scandal
 To *Israel*, diffidence of God, and doubt
 In feeble hearts, propense anough before
 To waver, or fall off and joyn with idols;
 Which is my chief affliction, shame and sorrow,
 The anguish of my Soul, that suffers not
 460 Mine eye to harbor sleep, or thoughts to rest.
 This only hope relieves me, that the strife
 With me hath end; all the contest is now
 'Twixt God and *Dagon*; *Dagon* hath presum'd,
 Me overthrown, to enter lists with God,
 His Deir^r comparing and preferring
 Before the God of *Abraham*. He, be sure,
 Will not connive, or linger, thus provok'd,
 But will arise and his great name assert:
Dagon must stoop, and shall e're long receive
 470 Such a discomfit, as shall quite despoil him
 Of all these boasted Trophies won on me,
 And with confusion blank his Worshippers.

Man. With cause this hope relieves thee, and these
 I as a Prophecy receive: for God, (words
 Nothing more certain will not long defer
 To vindicate the glory of his name
 Against all competition, nor will long
 Endure it, doubtfull whether God be Lord,
 Or *Dagon*. But for thee what shall be done?
 480 Thou must not in the mean while here forgot
 Lie in this miserable loathsome plight
 Neglected. I already have made way
 To some *Philistian* Lords, with whom to treat
 About thy ransom: well they may by this

Have

94 *Samson Agonistes.*

Have satisfi'd thir utmost of revenge
By pains and slaveries, worse than death inflicted
On thee, who now no more canst do them harm.

Sam. Spare that proposal, Father, spare the trouble
Of that sollicitation; let me here,

490 As I deserve, pay on my punishment;
And expiate, if possible, my crime,
Shamefull garrulity. To have reveal'd
Secrets of men, the secrets of a friend,
How hainous had the fact been, how deserving
Contempt, and scorn of all, to be excluded
All friendship and avoided as a blab,
The mark of fool set on his front?

But I Gods counsell have not kept, his holy secret
Presumptuously have publish'd, impiously,

500 Weakly at least, and shamefully: A sin
That *Gentiles* in thir Parables condemn
To thir abyss and horrid pains confin'd.

Man. Be penitent and for thy fault contrite,

But act not in thy own affliction, Son,
Repent the sin, but if the punishment

Thou canst avoid, self-preservation bids;

Or th' execution leave to high disposal,

And let another hand, not thine, exact

Thy penal forfeit from thy self; perhaps

510 God will relent, and quit thee all his debt;

Who evermore approves and more accepts

(Best pleas'd with humble and filial submission)

Him who imploring mercy sues for life,

Then who self-rigorous chooses death as due;

Which argues over-just, and self-displeas'd

For self-offence, more than for God offended.

Reject not then what offer'd means, who knows

But

Samson Agonistes. 45

But God hath set before us, to return thee
Home to thy countrey and his sacred house,
520 Where thou mayst bring thy off'rings, to avert
His further ire, with prayers and vows renew'd.

Sam. His pardon I implore; but as for life,
To what end should I seek it? when in strength
All mortals I excell'd, and great in hopes
With youthfull courage and magnanimous thoughts
Of birth from Heav'n foretold and high exploits,
Full of divine instinct, after some proof
Of Acts indeed heroic, far beyond

The Sons of *Anac*, famous now and blaz'd,

530 Fearless of danger, like a petty God

I walk'd about admir'd of all and dreaded

On hostile ground, none daring my affront.

Then swell'd with pride into the snare I fell

Of fair fallacious looks, venereal trains,

Softn'd with pleasure and voluptuous life;

At length to lay my head and hollow pledge

Of all my strength in the lascivious lap

Of a deceitfull Concubine who shor'd me

Like a tame Weather, all my precious fleece,

540 Then turn'd me out ridiculous, dispoil'd,

Shaven, and disarm'd among mine enemies.

Chor. Desire of wine and all delicious drinks,

Which many a famous Warriour overturns,

Thou couldst repress, nor did the dancing Ruby

Sparkling, out-pow'r'd, the flavor or the smell,

Or taste that cheers the hearts of Gods or Men,

Allure thee from the cool ChrySTALLINE stream.

Sam. Where ever fountain or fresh current flow'd

Against the Eastern ray, translucent, pure

550 With touch æth'rial of Heav'n's fiery rod

1

I drank; from the clear milky juice allaying
Thirst, and refresh'd; nor envy'd them the grape
Whose heads that turbulent liquor fills with fumes.

Chor. O madness, to think use of strongest wines
And strongest drinks our chief support of health,
When God with these forbidd'n made choice to rear
His mighty Champion, strong above compare,
Whose drink was only from the liquid brook.

Sam. But what avail'd this temperance, not compleat
360 Against another object more enticing?

What boots it at one gate to make defence,
And at another to let in the foe
Effeminatly vanquish'd? by which means,
Now blind, dishearn'd, sham'd, dishonour'd, quell'd,
To what can I be usefull, wherein serve
My Nation, and the work from Heaven impos'd,
But to sit idle on the household hearth,
A burdenous drone; to visitants a gaze,
Or pitied object, these redundant locks
370 Robustious to no purpose clustring down,
Vain monument of strength; till length of years
And sedentary numness craze my limbs
To a contemptible old age obscure.
Here rather let me drudge and earn my bread,
Till vermin or the draff of servile food
Consume me, and oft-invoked death
Halt'n the welcom end of all my pains.

Man. Wilt thou then serve the *Philistines* with that
Which was exprelly giv'n thee to annoy them? (gilt
380 Better at home lie bed-rid, not only idle,
Inglorious, unemploy'd, with age out-worn.
But God who caus'd a fountain at thy prayer
From the dry ground to spring, thy thirst to allay

After

After the brunt of batrel, can as easie
Cause light again within thy eyes to spring,
Wherewith to serve him better than thou hast;
And I perswade me so; why else this strength
Miraculous yet remaining in those locks?
His might continues in thee not for naught,
390 Nor shall his wondrous gifts be frustrate thus.

Sam. All otherwise to me my thoughts portend,
That these dark orbs no more shall treat with light,
Nor th' other light of life continue long,
But yield to double darkness nigh at hand:
So much I feel my genial spirits droop,
My hopes all flat, nature within me seems
In all her functions weary of her self;
My race of glory run, and race of shame,
And I shall shortly be with them that rest.

400 *Man.* Believe not these suggestions which proceed
From anguish of the mind and humours black,
That mingle with thy fancy. I however
Must not omit a Father's timely care
To prosecute the means of thy deliverance
By ransom, or how else: mean while be calm,
And healing words from these thy friends admit.

Sam. O that torment should not be confin'd
To the bodies wounds and sores,
With maladies innumerable
410 In heart, head, brest, and reins;
But must secret passage find
To th' inmost mind,
There exercise all his fierce accidents,
And on her purest spirits prey,
As on entrails, joints, and limbs
With answerable pains, but more intense,

G

Though

98 *Samson Agonistes.*

Though void of corporal sense.
 My griefs not only pain me
 As a lingering disease,
 620 But finding no redress, ferment and rage,
 Nor less than wounds immedicable
 Rankle, and fester, and gangrene,
 To black mortification.
 Thoughts my Tormenters arm'd with deadly stings
 Mangle my apprehensive tenderest parts,
 Exasperate, exulcerate, and raise
 Dire inflammation which no cooling herb
 Or medicinal liquor can assuage,
 Nor breath of Vernal Air from snowy *Alp*.
 630 Sleep hath forsook and giv'n me o're
 To death's benumbing Opium as my only cure.
 Thence faintings, swoonings of despair,
 And sense of Heav'n's desertion.
 I was his nursling once, and choice delight,
 His destin'd from the womb,
 Promisd by Heavenly message twice descending.
 Under his special eye
 Abstemious I grew up and thriv'd amain;
 He led me on to mightiest deeds
 640 Above the nerve of mortal arm
 Against the uncircumcis'd, our enemies.
 But now hath cast me off as never known,
 And to those cruel enemies,
 Whom I by his appointment had provok't,
 Left me all helpless with th' irreparable loss
 Of sight, reserv'd alive to be repeated
 The subject of thir cruelty or scorn.
 Nor am I in the list of them that hope;
 Hopeless are all my evils, all remediless;

Samsons Agonistes. 99

650 This one prayer yet remains, might I be heard,
 No long petition, speedy death,
 The close of all my miseries, and the balm.
Chor. Many are the sayings of the wise
 In ancient and in modern books enroll'd;
 Extolling Patience as the truest fortitude;
 And to the bearing well of all calamities,
 All chances incident to mans frail life.
 Consolatories writ
 With studied argument, and much perswasion sought
 660 Lenient of grief and anxious thought,
 But to th' afflicted in his pangs thir sound
 Little prevails, or rather seems a tune,
 Harsh, and of dissonant mood from his complaint,
 Unless he feel within
 Some source of consolation from above;
 Secret refreshings, that repair his strength,
 And fainting spirits uphold.
 God of our Fathers, what is man!
 That thou towards him with hand so various,
 670 Or might I say contrarious,
 Temperst thy providence through his short course,
 Not evenly, as thou rul'st
 The Angelic orders and inferior creatures mute,
 Irrational and brute.
 Nor do I name of men the common rout,
 That wandering loose about,
 Grow up and perish, as the summer flie,
 Heads without name no more remembered,
 But such as thou hast solemnly elected,
 680 With gifts and graces eminently adorn'd
 To some great work, thy glory,
 And peoples safety, which in part they effect.

Yet toward these thus dignifi'd, thou oft
Amidst this highth of noon,
Changest thy countenance, and thy hand with no re-
Of highest favours past (gard
From thee on them, or them to thee of service.

Nor only dost degrade them, or remit
To life obscur'd, which were a fair dismissal,
690 But throw'st them lower than thou didst exalt them
Unseemly falls in human eye, (high,
Too grievous for the trespass or omission,
Oft leav'st them to the hostile sword
Of Heathen and prophane, their carcasses
To dogs and fowls a prey, or else captiv'd:
Or to the unjust tribunals, under change of times,
And condemnation of the ingrateful multitude.
If these they scape, perhaps in poverty
With sickness and disease thou bow'st them down,
700 Painful diseases and deform'd,
In crude old age;
Though not disordinate, yet causeless suffering
The punishment of dissolute days, in fine,
Just or unjust, alike seem miserable,
For oft alike, both come to evil end.

So deal not with this once thy glorious Champion,
The Image of thy strength, and mighty minister.
What do I beg? how hast thou dealt already?
710 Behold him in this state calamitous, and turn
His labours, for thou canst, to peaceful end.

But who is this, what thing of Sea or Land?
Female of sex it seems,
That so bedeck'd, ornate, and gay,
Comesthis way sailing
Like a stately Ship

Of

Of *Tarsus*, bound for th' Isles
Of *Javan* or *Gadier*
With all her bravery on, and tackle trim,
Sails fill'd, and streamers waving,
720 Courted by all the winds that hold them play,
An Amber scent of odorous perfume
Her harbinger, a damsel train behind;
Some rich *Philistian* Matron she may seem,
And now at nearer view, no other certain
Than *Dalila* thy wife. (near me.

Sam. My Wife, my Traytreß, let her not come

Cho. Yet on she moves, now stands and eies thee fixt,
About t' have spoke, but now, with head declin'd
730 Like a fair flower furcharg'd with dew, she weeps
And words address seem into tears dissolv'd,
Wetting the borders of her silk'n veil:
But now again she makes address to speak.

Dal. With doubtful feet and wavering resolution
I came, still dreading thy displeasure, *Samson*,
Which to have merited, without excuse,
I cannot but acknowledge; yet if tears
May expiate (though the fact more evil drew
In the perverse event than I foresaw)
My penance hath not slack'n'd, though my pardon
740 No way assur'd. But conjugal affection
Prevailing over fear, and timorous doubt
Hath led me on desirous to behold
Once more thy face, and know of thy estate.
If aught in my ability may serve
To light'n what thou iustler'st, and appease
Thy mind with what amends is in my power,
Though late, yet in some part to recompense
My rash but more unfortunate misdeed.

Sam. Out, out *Hyæna*; these are thy wonted arts,
 And arts of every woman false like thee,
 To break all faith, all vows, deceive, betray,
 Then as repentant to submit, beseech,
 And reconciliation move with feign'd remorse,
 Confess, and promise wonders in her change,
 Not truly penitent, but chief to try
 Her husband, how far urg'd his patience bears,
 His virtue or weakness which way to assail:
 Then with more cautious and instructed skill
 Again transgresses, and again submits;
 That wisest and best men full oft beguil'd
 With goodness principl'd not to reject
 The penitent, but ever to forgive,
 Are drawn to wear out miserable days,
 Entangl'd with a poyinous bosom snake,
 If not by quick destruction soon cut off
 As I by thee, to Ages an example.

Dal. Yet hear me, *Samson*; not that I endeavour
 To lessen or extenuate my offence,
 But that on th' other side if it be weigh'd
 By it self, with aggravations not surcharg'd,
 Or else with just allowance counterpois'd,
 I may, if possible, thy pardon find
 The easier towards me, or thy hatred less.
 First granting, as I do, it was a weakness
 In me, but incident to all our sex,
 Curiosity, inquisitive, importune
 Of secrets, then with like infirmity
 To publish them, both common female faults:
 Was it not weakness also to make known
 For importunity, that is, for naught,
 Wherein consisted all thy strength and safety?

To

To what I did thou shew'dst me first the way.
 But I to enemies reveal'd, and should not.
 Nor shouldst thou have trusted that to womans frailty
 E're I to thee, thou to thy self wast cruel.
 Let weakness then with weakness come to part
 So near related, or the same of kind,
 Thine forgive mine; that men may censure thine
 790 The gentler, if severely thou exact not
 More strength from me, than in thy self was found.
 And what if Love, which thou interpret'st hate,
 The jealousy of Love, powerful of sway
 In human hearts, nor less in mine towards thee,
 Caus'd what I did? I saw thee mutable
 Of fancy, fear'd lest one day thou wouldst leave me
 As her at *Timna*, fought by all means therefore
 How to endear, and hold thee to me firmest:
 No better way I saw than by importuning
 800 To learn thy secrets, get into my power
 Thy key of strength and safety: thou wilt say,
 Why then reveal'd? I was assur'd by those
 Who tempted me, that nothing was design'd
 Against thee but safe custody, and hold:
 That made for me, I knew that liberty
 Would draw thee forth to perilous enterprises,
 While I at home sat full of cares and fears
 Wailing thy absence in my widow'd bed;
 Here I should still enjoy thee day and night
 Mine and Loves prisoner, not the *Philistines*,
 810 Whole to my self, unhazarded abroad,
 Fearless at home of partners in my love.
 These reasons in Loves law have pass'd for good,
 Though fond and reasonless to some perhaps;
 And Love hath oft, well meaning, wrought much wo,

G 4

Yet

104 *Samson Agonistes.*

Yet always pity or pardon hath obtain'd.
Be not unlike all others, not austere
As thou art strong, inflexible as steel.
If thou in strength all mortals dost exceed,
In uncompassionate anger do not so.

820 *Sam.* How cunningly the forerers displays
Her own transgressions, to upbraid me mine?
That malice not repentance brought thee hither,
By this appears: I gave, thou say'st, th' example,
I led the way; bitter reproach, but true,
I to my self was false e're thou to me,
Such pardon therefore as I give my folly,
Take to thy wicked deed: which when thou seest
Impartial, self-severe, inexorable,
Thou wilt renounce thy seeking, and much rather
830 Confess it feign'd, weakness is thy excuse,
And I believe it, weakness to resist
Philistian gold: if weakness may excuse,
What Murtherer, what Traytor, Parricide,
Incestuous, Sacrilegious, but may plead it?
All wickedness is weakness: that plea therefore
With God or Man will gain thee no remission.
But Love constrain'd thee; call it furious rage
To satisfy thy lust: Love seeks to have Love;
My love how couldst thou hope, who tookst the way
840 To raise in me inexpiable hate,
Knowing, as needs I must, by thee betray'd?
In vain thou striv'st to cover shame with shame,
Or by evasions thy crime uncoverst more.

Dal. Since thou determinst weakness for no plea
In man or woman, though to thy own condemning,
Hear what assaults I had, what snares besides,
What sieges girt me round, e're I consented;
Which

Samson Agonistes. 105

Which might have aw'd the best resolv'd of men,
The constantest, to have yielded without blame.
850 It was not gold, as to my charge thou lay'st,
That wrought with me: thou know'st the Magistrates
And Princes of my countrey came in person,
Solicited, commanded, threatn'd, urg'd,
Adjur'd by all the bonds of civil Duty
And of Religion, press'd how just it was,
How honourable, how glorious to entrap
A common enemy, who had destroy'd
Such numbers of our Nation: and the Priest
Was not behind, but ever at my ear,
860 Preaching how meritorious with the gods
It would be to ensnare an irreligious
Dishonourer of *Dagon*: what had I
To oppose against such powerful arguments?
Only my love of thee held long debate;
And combated in silence all these reasons
With hard contest: at length that grounded maxim
So ripe and celebrated in the mouths
Of wisest men; that to the public good
870 Private respects must yield; with grave authority
Took full possession of me and prevail'd;
Vertue, as I thought, truth, duty so enjoyning.

Sam. I thought where all thy circling wiles would
In feign'd Religion, smooth hypocrisie. (end;
But had thy love, still odiously pretended,
Bin, as it ought, sincere, it would have taught thee
Far other reasonings, brought forth other deeds.
I before all the daughters of my Tribe
And of my Nation chose thee from among
880 My enemies, lov'd thee, as too well thou knew'st,
Too well, unbosom'd all my secrets to thee,

Not

Not out of levity, but over-powr'd
 By thy request, who could deny thee nothing ;
 Yet now am judg'd an enemy. Why then
 Didst thou at first receive me for thy husband ?
 Then, as since then, thy countries foe profest :
 Being once a wife, for me thou wast to leave
 Parents and countrey ; nor was I their subject,
 Nor under their protection but my own,
 Thou mine, not theirs : if aught against my life
 890 Thy countrey sought of thee, it sought unjustly,
 Against the law of nature, law of nations,
 No more thy countrey, but an impious crew
 Of men conspiring to uphold thir state
 By worse than hostile deeds, violating the ends
 For which our countrey is a name so dear ;
 Not therefore to be obey'd. But zeal mov'd thee ;
 To please thy gods thou didst it ; gods unable
 To acquit themselves and prosecute their foes
 But by ungodly deeds, the contradiction
 900 Of their own deity, Gods cannot be :
 Less therefore to be pleas'd, obey'd, or fear'd,
 These false pretexts and varnish'd colours failing,
 Bare in thy guilt how foul must thou appear ?

Dal. In argument with men a woman ever
 Goes by the worse, whatever be her cause.

Sam. For want of words no doubt, or lack of
 Witness when I was worried with thy peals. (breath.)

Dal. I was a fool, too rash, and quite mistaken
 In what I thought would have succeeded best.
 910 Let me obtain forgiveness of thee, *Samson*,
 Afford me place to shew what recompence
 Towards thee I intend for what I have misdone,
 Misguided ; only what remains past cure

Bear not too sensibly, nor still insist
 To afflict thy self in vain : though fight be lost,
 Life yet hath many solaces, enjoy'd
 Where other senses want not their delights
 At home in leisure and domestic ease,
 Exempt from many a care and chance to which
 920 Eye-sight exposes daily men abroad.
 I to the Lords will intercede, nor doubting
 Thir favourable ear, that I may fetch thee
 From forth this loathsome prison-house, to abide
 With me, where my redoubl'd love and care
 With nursing diligence, to me glad office,
 May ever tend about thee to old age
 With all things grateful chear'd, and so suppli'd,
 That what by me thou hast lost thou least shalt miss.

Sam. No, no, of my condition take no care ;
 930 It fits not ; thou and I long since are twain ;
 Nor think me so unwary or accurst
 To bring my feet again into the snare
 Where once I have been caught ; I know thy trains
 Though dearly to my cost, thy gins, and toyls ;
 Thy fair enchanted cup, and warbling charms
 No more on me have power, their force is null'd,
 So much of Adders wisdom I have learn'd
 To fence my ear against thy sorceries.
 If in my flower of youth and strength, when all men
 940 Lov'd, honour'd, fear'd me, thou alone couldst hate me
 Thy Husband, slighr me, sell me, and forgo me ;
 How wouldst thou use me now, blind, and thereby
 Deceivable, in most things as a child
 Helpless, thence easily contemn'd, and scorn'd,
 And last neglected ? How wouldst thou insult
 When I must live uxorious to thy will

In perfect thraldom, how again betray me,
Bearing my words and doings to the Lords
To gloss upon, and censuring, frown or smile?

950 This Gaol I count the house of Liberty
To thine, whose doors my feet shall never enter.

Dal. Let me approach at least, and touch thy hand.

Sam. Not for thy life, lest fierce remembrance
My sudden rage to tear thee joint by joint. (wake

At distance I forgive thee, go with that;

Bewail thy fallhood, and the pious works

It hath brought forth to make thee memorable

Among illustrious women, faithful wives:

Cherish thy hast'n'd widowhood with the gold

960 Of Matrimonial treason: so farewell.

Dal. I see thou art implacable, more deaf

To prayers than winds and seas, yet winds to seas

Are reconcil'd at length, and Sea to Shore:

Thy anger unappeasable, still rages,

Eternal tempest never to be calm'd.

Why do I humble thus my self, and suing

For peace, reap nothing but repulse and hate?

Bid go with evil omen and the brand

Of infamy upon my name denounc't?

970 To mix with thy concerns I desist

Henceforth, nor too much disapprove my own.

Fame if not double-fac't is double-mouth'd,

And with contrary blast proclaims most deeds,

On both his wings, one black, th' other white,

Bears greatest names in his wild aerie flight.

My name perhaps among the Circumcis'd

In *Dan*, in *Judab*, and the bordering Tribes,

To all posterity may stand defam'd,

With malediction mention'd, and the blot

980 Of fallhood most unconjugal traduc't.

But in my countrey where I most desire,

In *Ecron*, *Gaza*, *Asdod*, and in *Gath*

I shall be nam'd among the famousst

Of Women, sung at solemn festivals,

Living and dead recorded, who to save

Her countrey from a fierce destroyer, chose

Above the faith of wedlock-bands, my tomb

With odours visited and annual flowers.

Not less renown'd than in Mount *Ephraim*,

990 *Jael*, who with inhospitable guile

Smote *Sisera* sleeping through the Temples nail'd.

Nor shall I count it hainous to enjoy

The public marks of honour and reward

Confer'd upon me, for the piety

Which to my countrey I was judg'd to have shewn.

At this who ever envies or repines

I leave him to his lot, and like my own.

Chor. She's gone, a manifest Serpent by her sting

Discover'd in the end, till now conceal'd.

1000 *Sam.* So let her go, God sent her to debase me,

And aggravate my folly, who committed

To such a viper his most sacred trust

Of secrecie, my safety, and my life.

Chor. Yet beauty, though injurious, hath strange

After offence returning, to regain (power,

Love once possess'd, nor can be easily

Repuls't, without much inward passion felt

And secret sting of amorous remorse.

Sam. Love quarrels oft in pleasing concord end,

1010 Not wedlock-treachery endangering life.

Cho. It is not virtue, wisdom, valour, wit,

Strength, comeliness of shape, or amplest merit

That

That womans love can win or long inherit ;
 But what it is, hard is to say,
 Harder to hit,
 (Which way soever men refer it)
 Much like thy riddle, *Samson*, in one day
 Or seven, though one should musing sit ;
 If any of these or all, the *Timmian* bride
 30 Had not so soon preferr'd
 Thy Paranymp, worthless to thee compar'd,
 Successour in thy bed,
 Nor both so loosely disally'd
 Thir nuptials, nor this last so treacherously
 Had shorn the fatal harvest of thy head.
 Is it for that such outward ornament
 Was lavish't on their Sex, that inward gifts
 Were left for haste unfinish't, judgment scant,
 Capacity not rais'd to apprehend
 40 Or value what is best
 In choice, but ofttest to affect the wrong ?
 Or was too much of self-love mixt,
 Of constancy no root infixt,
 That either they love nothing, or not long ?
 What e're it be, to wisest men and best
 Seeming at first all heavenly under virgin veil,
 Soft, modest, meek, demure,
 Once join'd, the contrary she proves, a thorn
 Intestin, far within defensive arms
 50 A cleaving mischief, in his way to vertue
 Adverse and turbulent, or by her charms
 Draws him awry enslav'd
 With dotage, and his sense deprav'd
 To folly and shameful deeds which ruin ends:
 What Pilot so expert but needs must wreck

Embarqu'd with such a Steers-mate at the Helm ?
 Favour'd of heav'n who finds
 One vertuous rarely found,
 That in domestic good combines :
 60 Happy that house ! his way to peace is smooth :
 But vertue which breaks through all opposition,
 And all temptation can remove,
 Most shines and most is acceptable above.
 Therefore Gods universal Law
 Gave to the man despotic power
 Over his female in due awe,
 Nor from that right to part an hour,
 Smile she or lowre :
 So shall he least confusion draw
 70 On his whole life, not sway'd
 By female usurpation, or dismay'd.
 But had we best retire, I see a storm ?
Sam. Fair days have oft contracted wind and rain.
Chor. But this another kind of tempest brings.
Sam. Be less abstruse, my riddling days are past.
Chor. Look now for no enchanting voice, nor fear
 The bait of honied words ; a rougher tongue
 Draws hitherward, I know him by his stride,
 The Giant *Harapha* of *Gath*, his look
 80 Haughty as is his pile high-built and proud.
 Comes he in peace ? what wind hath blown him hither
 I less conjecture than when first I saw
 The sumptuous *Dahla* floating this way :
 His habit carries peace, his brow defiance.
Sam. Or peace or not, alike to me he comes.
Cho. His freight wee soon shall know, he now arrives.
Har. I come not *Samson*, to condole thy chance,
 As these perhaps, yet wish it had not been, Though

Though for no friendly intent. I am of *Gath*,
 90 Men call me *Harapha*, of stock renown'd
 As *Og* or *Anak* and the *Emims* old
 That *Kariatbaïm* held, thou knowst me now
 If thou at all art known. Much I have heard
 Of thy prodigious might and feats perform'd
 Incredible to me, in this displeas'd,
 That I was never present on the place
 Of those encounters, where we might have tri'd
 Each others force in camp or list'd field:
 And now am come to see of whom such noise
 100 Hath walk'd about, and each limb to survey,
 If thy appearance answer loud report.

Sam. The way to know were not to see but taste.

Har. Dost thou already single me? I thought
 Gives and the Mill had tam'd thee. O that fortune
 Had brought me to the field where thou art fam'd
 To have wrought such wonders with an Asses Jaw;
 I should have forc'd thee soon with other arms,
 Or left thy carcass where the Ass lay thrown:
 So had the glory of Prowess been recover'd

110 To *Palestine*, won by a *Philistine*
 From the unforeskinn'd race, of whom thou bear'st
 The highest name for valiant Acts, that honour
 Certain to have won by mortal duel from thee,
 I lose, prevented by thy eyes put out. (but do

Sam. Boast not of what thou wouldst have done,
 What then thou would'st, thou seest it in thy hand.

Har. To combat with a blind man I disdain,
 And thou hast need much washing to be toucht.

Sam. Such usage as your honourable Lords
 120 Afford me assassinated and betray'd,
 Who durst not with thir whole united powers

In fight withstand me single and unarm'd,
 Nor in the house with chamber Ambushes
 Close-banded durst attaque me, no nor sleeping,
 Till they had hir'd a woman with their gold
 Breaking her Marriage Faith to circumvent me.
 Therefore without feign'd shifts let be assign'd
 Some narrow place enclos'd, where fight may give thee,
 Or rather flight, no great advantage on me;

130 Then put on all thy gorgeous arms, thy Helmet
 And Brigandine of brass, thy broad Habergeon,
 Vant-brass and Greves, and Gauntlet, and thy Spear
 A Weavers beam, and seven-times-folded shield,
 I only with an Oak'n staff will meet thee,
 And raise such out-cries on thy clatter'd Iron,
 Which long shall not with-hold me from thy head,
 That in a little time while breath remains thee,
 Thou oft shalt wish thy self at *Gath* to boast
 Again in safety what thou wouldst have done
 140 To *Samson*, but shall never see *Gath* more.

Har. Thou durst not thus disparage glorious arms
 Which greatest Heroes have in battel worn,
 Thir ornament and safety, had not spells
 And black enchantments, some Magicians Art
 Arm'd thee or charm'd thee strong, which thou from
 Heaven

Feign'dst at thy birth was giv'n thee in thy hair,
 Where strength can least abide, though all thy hairs
 Were bristles rang'd like those that ridge the back
 Of chaf't wild Boars, or rustl'd Porcupines

150 *Sam.* I know no Spells, use no forbidden Arts;
 My trust is in the living God who gave me
 At my Nativity this strength, diffus'd
 No less through all my sinews, joints and bones.

Then thine, while I preserv'd these locks unshorn,
The pledge of my unviolated vow.

For proof hereof, if *Dagon* be thy god,

Go to his Temple, invoke his aid

With solemnest devotion, spread before him

How highly it concerns his glory now

To frustrate and dissolve these Magic spells,

160 Which I to be the power of *Israel's* God

Avow, and challenge *Dagon* to the test,

Offering to combat thee his Champion bold,

With th' utmost of his Godhead seconded:

Then thou shalt see, or rather to thy sorrow

Soon feel, whose God is strongest, thine or mine.

Har. Presume not on thy God, what e're he be,

Thee he regards not, owns not, hath cut off

Quite from his people, and delivered up

170 Into thy Enemies hand, permitted them

To put out both thine eyes, and fetter'd send thee

Into the common Prison, there to grind

Among the Slaves and Asses thy comrades,

As good for nothing else, no better service

With those thy boyish'rous locks, no worthy match

For valour to assail, nor by the sword

Of noble Warriour, so to stain his honour,

But by the Barbers razor best subdu'd.

Sam. All these indignities, for such they are

180 From thine, these evils I deserve and more,

Acknowledge them from God inflicted on me

Justly, yet despair not of his final pardon

Whose ear is ever open; and his eye

Gracious to re-admit the suppliant;

In confidence whereof I once again

Defie thee to the trial of mortal fight,

By combat to decide whose god is God,

Thine or whom I with *Israel's* Sons adore.

Har. Fair honour that thou dost thy God, in trusting

190 He will accept thee to defend his cause,

A Murderer, a Revolter, and a Robber. (me these?)

Sam. Tongue-doughtie Giant, how dost thou prove

Har. Is not thy Nation subject to our Lords?

Thir Magistrates confess it, when they took thee

As a League-breaker and deliver'd bound

Into our hands: for hadst thou not committed

Notorious murder on those thirty men

At *Askalon*, who never did thee harm,

Then like a Robber strip'dst them of their robes?

200 The *Philistines*, when thou hadst broke the league,

Went up with armed powers thee only seeking,

To others did no violence nor spoil.

Sam. Among the Daughters of the *Philistines*

I chose a Wife, which argu'd me no foe;

And in your City held my Nuptial Feast:

But your ill-meaning Politician Lords,

Under pretence of Bridal friends and guests,

Appointed to await me thirty spies,

Who threatening cruel death constrain'd the bride

210 To wring from me and tell to them my secret,

That solv'd the riddle which I had propos'd

When I perceiv'd all set on enmity,

As on my enemies, where ever chanc'd,

I us'd hostility, and took that spoil

To pay my underminers in their coin.

My Nation was subjected to your Lords

It was the force of Conquest; force with force

Is well ejected when the Conquer'd can.

But I a private person, whom my Country

210 As a league-breaker gave up bound, presum'd
Single Rebellion and did hostile Acts.
I was no private but a person rais'd
With strength sufficient and command from heav'n
To free my Countrey; if their servile minds
Me thir deliverer sent would not receive,
But to thir Masters gave me up for nought,
Th' unworthier they; whence to this day they serve.
I was to do my part from Heav'n assign'd,
And had perform'd it if my known offence
220 Had not disabl'd me, not all your force:
These shifts refuted, answer thy appellant
Though by his blindness maim'd for high attempts,
Who now defies thee thrice to single fight,
As a petty enterprise of small enforce.

Har. With thee a Man condemn'd, a Slave enrol'd,
Due by the Law to capital punishment?
To fight with thee no man of arms will deign.

Sam. Cam'st thou for this, vain boaster, to survey me,
To descant on my strength, and give thy verdict?
230 Come nearer, part not hence so slight inform'd;
But take good heed my hand survey not thee.

Har. O Baal-zebub! can my ears unus'd
Hear these dishonours, and not render death?

Sam. No man with-holds thee, nothing from thy
Fear incurable; bring up thy van, (hand
My heels are fetter'd, but my fist is free.

Har. This insolence other kind of answer fits.

Sam. Go baffl'd coward, lest I run upon thee,
Though in these chains, bulk without spirit vast,
240 And with one buffet lay thy structure low,
Or swing thee in the Air, then dash thee down
To the hazard of thy brains and shatter'd sides.

Har.

Har. By *Astartoth* e're long thou shalt lament
These braveries in Irons loaden on thee.

Chor. His Giantship is gone somewhat crest-fall'n,
Stalking with less unconquerable strides,
And lower looks, but in a sultrier chase.

Sam. I dread him not, nor all his Giant-brood,
Though fame divulg'd him Father of five Sons
250 All of Gigantic size, *Goliath* chief.

Chor. He will directly to the Lords, I fear,
And with malicious counsel stir them up
Some way or other yet further to afflict thee.

Sam. He must allege some cause, and offer'd fight
Will not dare mention, lest a question rise
Whether he durst accept the offer or not,
And that he durst not plain enough appear'd.
Much more affliction then already felt
They cannot well impose, nor I sustain;
260 If they intend advantage of my labours
The work of many hands, which earns my keeping
With no small profit daily to my owners.
But come what will, my deadliest foe will prove
My speediest friend, by death to rid me hence,
The worst that he can give, to me the best.
Yet so it may fall out, because thir end
Is hate, not help to me, it may with mine
Draw thir own ruin who attempt the deed.

Chor. Oh how comely it is and how reviving
270 To the Spirits of just men long oppress'd!
When God into the hands of thir deliverer
Puts invincible might
To quell the mighty of the Earth, th' oppressor,
The brute and boisterous force of violent men
Hardy and industrious to support

Tyrannic power, but raging to pursue
 The righteous and all such as honour Truth;
 He all thir Ammunition
 And feats of War defeats
 120 With plain Heroic magnitude of mind
 And celestial vigour arm'd,
 Thir Armories and Magazines contemns,
 Renders them useles, while
 With winged expedition
 Swift as the lightning glance he executes
 His errand on the wicked, who surpris'd
 Lose thir defence distracted and amaz'd.

But patience is more oft the exercise
 Of Saints, the trial of thir fortitude,
 130 Making them each his own Deliverer,
 And Victor over all
 That tyrannie or fortune can inflict,
 Either of these is in thy lot,
Samson, with might endu'd
 Above the Sons of men; but sight bereav'd
 May chance to number thee with those
 Whom Patience finally must crown.
 This Idols day hath bin to thee no day of rest,
 Labouring thy mind
 140 More then the working day thy hands,
 And yet perhaps more trouble is behind.
 For I desery this way
 Some other tending, in his hand
 A Scepter or quaint staff he bears,
 Comes on amain, speed in his look.
 By his habit I discern him now
 A Public Officer, and now at hand,
 His message will be short and voluble.

Off. *Ebrews*, the Pris'ner *Samson* here I seek.
 120 *Chor.* His manacles remark him, there he sits.
Off. *Samson*, to thee our Lords thus bid me say;
 This day to *Dagon* is a solemn Feast,
 With Sacrifices, Triumph, Pomp, and Games;
 Thy strength they know surpassing human race,
 And now some public proof thereof require
 To honour this great Feast, and great Assembly;
 Rise therefore with all speed and come along,
 Where I will see thee heartn'd and fresh clad
 To appear as fits before th' illustrious Lords.
 130 *Sam.* Thou knowst I am an *Ebrew*, therefore tell
 Our Law forbids at thir Religious Rites (them,
 My presence; for that cause I cannot come.
Off. This answer, be assur'd, will not content them.
Sam. Have they not sword-players, and ev'ry sort
 Of Gymnic Artists, Wrestlers, Riders, Runners,
 Juglers and Dancers, Antics, Mimmers, Mimics,
 But they must pick me out with shackles tir'd,
 And over-labour'd at thir publick Mill,
 To make them sport with blind activity?
 140 Do they not seek occasion of new quarrels
 On my refusal to distress me more,
 Or make a game of my calamities?
 Return the way thou cam'st, I will not come.
Off. Regard thy self, this will offend them highly.
Sam. My self? my conscience and internal peace.
 Can they think me so broken, so debas'd
 With corporal servitude, that my mind ever
 Will condescend to such absurd commands?
 Although thir drudge, to be thir fool or jester,
 150 And in my midst of sorrow and heart-grief
 To shew them feats, and play before thir god.

The worst of all indignities, yet on me
Joyn'd with extream contempt? I will not come.

Off. My message was impos'd on me with speed,
Brooks no delay: is this thy resolution?

Sam. So take it with what speed thy message needs.

Off. I am sorry what this stoutness will produce.

Sam. Perhaps thou shalt have cause to sorrow indeed.

Chor. Consider, *Samson*; matters now are strain'd
Up to the highth, whether to hold or break;

He's gone, and who knows how he may report

Thy words by adding fuel to the flame?

Expect another message more imperious,

More Lordly thund'ring then thou well wilt bear.

Sam. Shall I abuse this Consecrated gift
Of strength, again returning with my hair

After my great transgression, so requite

Favour renew'd, and add a greater sin

By prostituting holy things to Idols;

A *Nazarite* in place abominable

Vaunting my strength in honour to thir *Dagon*?

Besides, how vile, contemptible, ridiculous,

What act more execrably unclean, prophane?

Chor. Yet with this strength thou serv'st the *Philis-*
*Idol*atrous, uncircumcis'd, unclean. *(Sings,*

Sam. Not in thir Idol-worship, but by labour

Honest and lawful to deserve my food

Of those who have me in thir civil power. *(not,*

Chor. Where the heart joyns not, outward acts defile

Sam. Where outward force constrains, the sentence

But who constrains me to the Temple of *Dagon*, (holds

Not dragging? the *Philistian* Lords command.

Commands are no constraints. If I obey them,

I do it freely, venturing to displease

God

God for the fear of Man, and Man prefer,

Set God behind: which in his jealousie

Shall never, unrepented, find forgiveness,

Yet that he may dispense with me or thee

Present in Temples at Idolatrous Rites

For some important cause, thou needst not doubt.

Chor. How thou wilt here come off surmounts my

Sam. Be of good courage, I begin to feel *(reach,*

Some rousing motions in me which dispose

To something extraordinary my thoughts.

I with this Messenger will go along,

Nothing to do, be sure, that may dishonour

Our Law, or stain my vow of *Nazarite*.

If there be ought of presage in the mind,

This day will be remarkable in my life

By some great act, or of my days the last.

Chor. In time thou hast resolv'd, the man returns.

Off. *Samson*, this second message from our Lords

To thee I am bid say. Art thou our Slave,

Our Captive, at the public Mill our drudge,

And dar'st thou at our sending and command

Dispute thy coming? come without delay;

Or we shall find such Engines to assail

And hamper thee, as thou shalt come of force,

Though thou art fiermer fastn'd then a rock.

Sam. I could be well content to try thir Art,
Which to no few of them would prove pernicious.

Yet knowing thir advantages too many,

Because they shall not trail me through thir streets

Like a wild Beast, I am content to go.

Masters commands come with a power resistless

To such as owe them absolute subjection;

And for a life who will not change his purpose?

(Sings)

(So mutable are all the ways of men)

Yet this be sure, in nothing to comply

420 Scandalous or forbidden in our Law.

Off. I praise thy resolution, doff these links :
By this compliance thou wilt win the Lords
To favour, and perhaps to set thee free.

Sam. Brethren farewell, your company along
I will not wish, lest it perhaps offend them
To see me girt with Friends; and how the sight
Of me as of a common Enemy,
So dreaded once, may now exasperate them
I know not: Lords are Lordliest in thir wine;
430 And the well-feasted Priest then soonest fir'd
With zeal, if aught Religion seem concern'd :
No less the people on thir Holy-days
Impetuous, insolent, unquenchable ;
Happ'n what may, of me expect to hear
Nothing dishonourable, impure, unworthy
Our God, our Law, my Nation, or my self,
The last of me or no I cannot warrant.

Chor. Go, and the Holy One
Of *Israel* be thy guide
440 To what may serve his glory best, and spread his name
Great among the Heathen round :
Send the Angel of thy Birth to stand
Fast by the side, who from thy Fathers field
Rode up in flames after his message told
Of thy conception, and be now a shield
Of fire; that Spirit that first rusht on thee
In the Camp of *Dan*
Be efficacious in thee now at need.
For never was from Heaven imparted
450 Measure of strength so great to mortal seed,

As in thy wond'rous actions hath been seen.
But wherefore comes old *Manoa* in such haste
With youthful steps? much livelier then e're while
He seems: supposing here to find his Son,
Or of him bringing to us some glad news?

Man. Peace with you brethren; my inducement
Was not at present here to find my Son, (hither
By order of the Lords new parted hence
To come and play before them at thir Feast.

460 I heard all as I came, the City rings
And numbers thither flock, I had no will,
Lest I should see him forc't to things unseemly.
But that which mov'd my coming now, was chiefly
To give ye part with me what hope I have
With good success to work his liberty.

Chor. That hope would much rejoyce us to partake
With thee; say reverend Sir, We thirst to hear.

Man. I have attempted one by one the Lords
Either at home, or through the high street passing,
470 With supplication prone and Fathers tears
To accept of ransom for my Son thir prisoner,
Some much averse I found and wondrous harsh,
Contemptuous, proud, set on revenge and spite;
That part most reverenc'd *Dagon* and his priests,
Others more moderate seeming, but thir aim
Private reward, for which both God and State
They easily would set to sale, a third
More generous far and civil, who confess'd
They had enough reveng'd, having reduc't
480 Thir foe to misery beneath thir feet,
The rest was magnanimity to remit,
If some convenient ransom were propos'd.
What noise or shout was that? it tore the Skie.

Chor. Doubtless the people shouting to behold
Thir once great dread, captive, and blind before them,
Or at some proof of strength before them shown.

Man. His ransom, if my whole inheritance
May compass it, shall willingly be paid
And numberd down: much rather I shall chuse
400 To live the poorest in my Tribe, then richest,
And he in that calamitous prison left.
No, I am fixt not to part hence without him.
For his redemption all my Patrimony,
If need be, I am ready to forgo
And quit: not wanting him, I shall want nothing.

Chor. Fathers are wont to lay up for thir Sons,
Thou for thy Son art bent to lay out all;
Sons wont to nurse thir Parents in old age,
Thou in old age car'st how to nurse thy Son
500 Made older then thy age through eye-sight lost.

Man. It shall be my delight to tend his eyes,
And view him sitting in the house, enobl'd
With all those high exploits by him achiev'd,
And on his shoulders waving down those locks,
That of a Nation arm'd the strength contain'd:
And I perswade me God hath not permitted
His strength again to grow up with his hair
Garrison'd round about him like a Camp
Of faithful Souldiery, were not his purpose
110 To use him further yet in some great service,
Not to sit idle with so great a gift
Useless, and thence ridiculous about him,
And since his strength with eye-sight was not lost,
God will restore him eye-sight to his strength.

Chor. Thy hopes are not ill founded nor seem vain
Of his delivery, and thy joy thereon

Conceiv'd,

Conceiv'd, agreeable to a Fathers love,
In both which we, as next participate.

Man. I know your friendly minds and—O what
600 Mercy of heav'n what hideous noise was that! (noise!)
Horribly loud unlike the former shout.

Chor. Noise call you it or universal groan
As if the whole inhabitation perish'd,
Blood, death, and deathful deeds are in that noise,
Ruin, destruction at the utmost point.

Man. Of ruin indeed me thought I heard the noise,
Oh it continues, they have slain my Son.

Chor. Thy Son is rather slaying them, that outcry
From slaughter of one foe could not ascend.

110 *Man.* Some dismal accident it needs must be;
What shall we do, stay here or run and see?

Chor. Best keep together here, lest running thither
We unawares run into dangers mouth.

This evil on the *Philistines* is fall'n,
From whom could else a general cry be heard?
The sufferers then will scarce molest us here,
From other hands we need not much to fear.
What if his eye-sight (for to *Israel's* God
Nothing is hard) by miracle restor'd,

140 He now be dealing dole among his foes,
And over heaps of slaughter'd walk his way?

Man. That were a joy presumptuous to be thought.

Chor. Yet God hath wrought things as incredible
For his people of old; what hinders now?

Man. He can I know, but doubt to think he will;
Yet Hope would fain subscribe, and tempts Belief.
A little stay will bring some notice hither.

Chor. Of good or bad so great, of bad the sooner;
For evil new-riders post, while good new-ham-

And

35^o And to our wish I see one hither speeding,
An *Ebrew*, as I guess, and of our Tribe.

Mess. O whither shall I run, or which way flee
The sight of this so horrid spectacle
Which earst my eyes beheld and yet behold;
For dire imagination still pursues me.
But providence or instinct of nature seems,
Or reason though disturb'd, and scarce consulted
To have guided me aright, I know not how,
To the first reverend *Manoa*, and to these
36^o My Countreymen, whom here I knew remaining,
As at some distance from the place of horror,
So in the sad event too much concern'd.

Man. The accident was loud, and heard before thee
With rueful cry, yet what it was we hear not,
No Preface needs, thou seest we long to know.

Mess. It would burst forth, but I recover breath
And sense distract, to know well what I utter.

Man. Tell us the sum, the circumstance defer.

Mess. *Gaza* yet stands, but all her Sons are fall'n,
All in a moment overwhelm'd and fall'n.

37^o *Man.* Sad, but thou know'st to *Israelites* not saddest
The desolation of a Hostile City.

Mess. Feed on that first, there may in grief be surfeit.

Man. Relate by whom. *Mess.* By *Samson*.

(*Man.* That still lessens

The sorrow, and converts it nigh to joy.

Mess. Ah *Manoa* I refrain, too suddenly
To utter what will come at last too soon;
Lest evil tidings with too rude irruption
Hitting thy aged ear should pierce too deep.

38^o *Man.* Suspense in news is torture, speak them out.

Mess. Then take the worst in brief, *Samson* is dead.

Man.

Man. The worst indeed. O all my hope's defeated
To free him hence! but death who sets all free
Hath paid his ransom now and full discharge.
What windy joy this day had I conceiv'd
Hopeful of his Delivery, which now proves
Abortive as the first-born bloom of spring
Nipt with the lagging rear of winters frost.
Yet e're I give the reins to grief, say first,
How did he? death to life is crown or shame.
All by him fell thou say'st, by whom fell he,
39^o What glorious hand gave *Samson* his death's wound?

Mess. Unwounded of his enemies he fell.

Man. Wearied with slaughter then or how? explain.

Mess. By his own hands.

Man. Self-violence? what cause

Brought him so soon at variance with himself

Among his foes? *Mess.* Inevitable cause

At once both to destroy and be destroy'd;

The Edifice where all were met to see him

40^o Upon thir heads and on his own he pull'd.

Man. O lastly over strong against thy self!

A dreadfull way thou took'st to thy revenge.

More then enough we know; but while things yet

Are in confusion, give us if thou canst,

Eye-witness of what first or last was done,

Relation more particular and distinct.

Mess. Occasions drew me early to this City,

And as the gates I enter'd with Sun-rise,

The morning Trumpets Festival proclaim'd.

41^o Through each high street: little I had dispatch'd

When all abroad was rumour'd that this day

Samson should be brought forth to shew the people

Proof of his mighty strength in feats and games;

I sorrow'd at his captive state, but minded
 Not to be absent at that spectacle.
 The building was a specious Theatre
 Half-round on two main Pillars vaulted high,
 With seats where all the Lords and each degree
 Of sort, might sit in order to behold,
 620 The other side was op'd, where the throng
 On banks and scaffolds under Skie might stand;
 Among these aloof obscurely stood.
 The Feast and noon grew high, and Sacrifice
 Had fill'd thir hearts with mirth, high cheer, and wine,
 When to thir sports they turn'd. Immediately
 Was *Samson* as a public servant brought,
 In thir state Livery clad; before him Pipes
 And Timbrels, on each side went armed guards,
 Both horse and foot before him and behind
 630 Archers, and Slingers, Cataphracts and Spears.
 At sight of him the people with a shout
 Rist'd the Air clamouring thir god with praise,
 Who had made thir dreadful enemy thir thrall.
 He patient but undaunted where they led him,
 Came to the place, and what was set before him
 Which without help of eye might be assay'd,
 To heave, pull, draw, or break, he still perform'd
 All with incredible, stupendious force,
 None daring to appear Antagonist.
 640 At length for intermission sake they led him
 Between the pillars; he his guide requested
 (For so from such as nearer stood we heard)
 As over-tir'd to let him lean a while
 With both his arms on those two massie Pillars
 That to the arched roof gave main support.
 He unsuspecting led him; which when *Samson*

Felt in his arms, with head a while enclin'd,
 And eyes fast fixt he stood, as one who pray'd,
 Or some great matter in his mind revolv'd.
 At last with head erect thus cryed aloud,
 40 Hitherto, Lords, what your commands impos'd
 I have perform'd, as reason was, obeying,
 Nor without wonder or delight beheld.
 Now of my own accord such other tryal
 I mean to shew you of my strength, yet greater;
 As with amaze shall strike all who behold.
 This utter'd, straining all his nerves he bow'd,
 As with the force of winds and waters pent,
 When Mountains tremble, those two massie Pillars
 With horrible convulsion to and fro,
 40 He rugg'd, he took, till down they came and drew
 The whole roof after them, with burst of thunder
 Upon the heads of all who sat beneath,
 Lords, Ladies, Captains, Councillors, or Priests,
 Thir choice nobility and flower, not only
 Of this but each *Philistian* City round
 Met from all parts to solemnize this Feast.
Samson with these immixt, inevitably
 Pull'd down the same destruction on himself
 40 The vulgar only scap'd who stood without.
 Chor. O dearly-bought revenge, yet glorious!
 Living or dying thou hast fulfill'd
 The work for which thou wast foretold
 To *Israel*, and now ly'st victorious
 Among thy slain self-kill'd
 Not willingly, but tangl'd in the fold,
 Of dire necessity, whole law in death conjoin'd
 Thee with thy slaughter'd foes in number more
 Than all thy life had slain before.

680 *Semichor.* While thir hearts were jocund & sublime
 Drunk with Idolatry, drunk with Wine,
 And fat regorg'd of Bulls and Goats,
 Chaunting thir Idol, and preferring
 Before our living Dread who dwells
 In *Silo* his bright Sanctuary:
 Among them he a spirit of phrenzie sent,
 Who hurt thir minds,
 And urg'd them on with mad desire
 To call in hast for thir destroyer;
 690 They only set on sport and play
 Unweetingly importun'd
 Thir own destruction to come speedy upon them,
 So fond are mortal men
 Fall'n into wrath divine,
 As thir own ruin on themselves to invite,
 Insensate left, or to sense reprobate,
 And with blindness internal struck.

Semichor. But he though blind of sight,
 Despis'd and thought extinguish't quite,
 700 With inward eyes illuminated
 His fierie vertue rouz'd
 From under ashes into sudden flame,
 And as an ev'ning Dragon came,
 Assailant on the perched rooks,
 And nests in order rang'd
 Of tame villatic Fowle; but as an Eagle
 His cloudless thunder bolted on thir heads.
 So vertue giv'n for lost,
 Deprest, and overthrown, as seem'd,
 710 Like that self-begon'n bird
 In the *Arabian* woods embost,
 That no second knows nor third,

And lay e're while a Holocaust,
 From out her ashie womb now teem'd,
 Revives, reffourishes, then vigorous most
 When most unactive deem'd,
 And though her body die, her fame survives,
 A secular bird ages of lives.

Man. Come, come, no time for lamentation now,
 Nor much more cause, *Samson* hath quit himself
 Like *Samson*, and heroically finish'd
 A life Heroic, on his Enemies
 Fully reveng'd, hath left them years of mourning,
 And lamentation to the Sons of *Chapter*
 Through all *Philistian* bounds. To *Israel*
 Honour hath left, and freedom, let but them
 Find courage to lay hold on this occasion,
 To himself and Fathers house eternal fame;
 And which is best and happiest yet, all this
 720 With God not parted from him, as was feard,
 But favouring and assisting to the end.
 Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail
 Or knock the breast, no weakness, no contempt,
 Dispraise, or blame, nothing but well and fair,
 And what may quiet us in a death so noble.
 Let us go find the body where it lies
 Sok't in his enemies blood, and from the stream
 With lavers pure and cleansing herbs wash off
 The clotted gore. I with what speed thee while
 730 (*Gaza* is not in plight to say us nay)
 Will send for all my kindred, all my friends
 To fetch him hence and solemnly attend
 With silent obsequie and funeral train
 Home to his Fathers house: there will I build him
 A Monument, and plant it round with shade

Of Laurel ever green, and branching Palm,
 With all his Trophies hung, and Acts enroll'd
 In copious Legend, or sweet Lyric Song.
 Fluther shall all the valiant youth resort,
 790 And from his memory inflame thir breasts
 To matchless valour, and adventures high:
 The Virgins also shall on feastfull days
 Visit his Tomb with flowers, only bewailing
 His lot unfortunate in nuptial choice,
 From whence captivity and loss of eyes.

Chor. All is best, though we oft doubt,
 What th' unsearchable dispose
 Of highest wisdom brings about,
 And ever best found in the close.
 795 Oft he seems to hide his face;
 But unexpectedly returns
 And to his faithful Champion hath in place
 Bore witness gloriously; whence *Gaza* mourns
 And all that band them to resist
 His uncontrollable intent,
 His servants he with new acquit
 Of true experience from this great event
 With peace and consolation hath dismiss'd,
 And calm of mind all passion spent.

THE END.

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